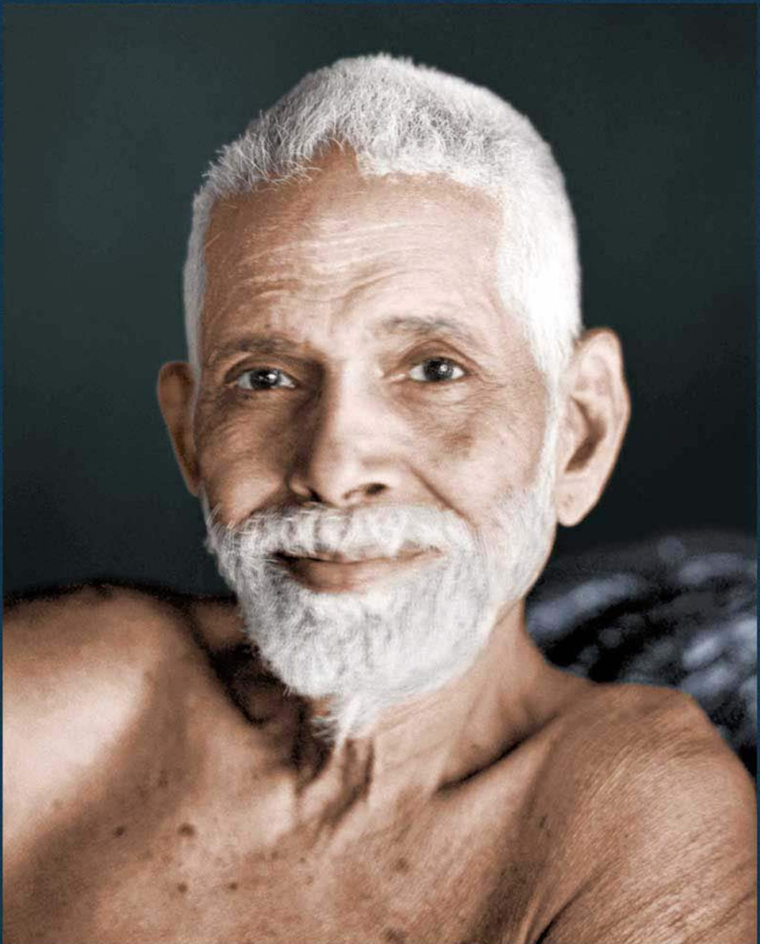
The Collected Works of SRI RAMANA MAHARSHI



PART ONE

ORIGINAL WORKS

PROSE

1

Self-enquiry

Self-enquiry is the first work the Maharshi ever wrote. It was written about 1901, that is, when he was a young man of about twenty-two. He was already a Jnani *(Sage) in perfect realization of the Self, in the resplendent bliss of Divine Knowledge. At that time he was living in Virupaksha Cave on the hill of Arunachala. A number of disciples had already gathered round him. Although he had not actually taken a vow of silence, he seldom spoke, and so wrote his replies to certain questions put to him by Gambhiram Seshayya, one of the earliest devotees. The latter copied them in his diary. After his death this diary was obtained from his brother. The questions and answers were edited by Natanananda and published with Bhagavan's approval under the name of* Vichara Sangraham, *or* Self-Enquiry. *Subsequently they were changed into the form of an essay. The original form has been adopted in the present work.*

There is no youthfulness or immaturity in the work. The Master wrote with the authority of full spiritual knowledge, just as in his later years. Like all his expositions, verbal as well as written, this is concerned with practical questions of the path to realization of the Self, never with barren theory. However, it does differ from later expositions in one important

respect: that is, that it describes not only the path of Self-enquiry but others also; meditation on one's identity with the Self and a yogic *path based on breath-control. He himself prescribed only Self-enquiry or submission to the Guru. He would say: "There are two ways: ask yourself 'Who am I?' or submit."*

Why did he include the mention of less direct and more elaborate methods in this first exposition? The obvious contingent reason is that the disciple for whom it was written had been reading books about these various methods and asked questions about them. Perhaps also, in a wider sense, it is appropriate that there should first be a general exposition of various methods before the lifelong instruction in that which he prescribed. Certainly the other methods, although described, are scarcely recommended.

The breath control that is described is, of course, not mere physical exercise. It is the spiritual significance of the exercise that makes it an elaborate science. 'Science' is indeed the right word for it, for it is a traditional Indian science of self-purification. This makes it abstruse for the Western reader who has no previous grounding in it, especially as, like all sciences, it has its technical vocabulary which does not permit adequate translation without lengthy notes. One has to remember that in writing this exposition the Maharshi knew that he could count on a technical knowledge of the science in question in the person for whom he wrote. The consolation for Western readers is to remember that he neither recommended nor prescribed this path and in his later works scarcely mentioned it. It is not necessary for them to learn its technicalities.

Invocation

Is there any way of adoring the Supreme which is all, except by abiding firmly as That!

1

Disciple: Master! what is the means to gain the state of eternal bliss, ever devoid of misery?

Master: Apart from the statement in the Vedas that wherever there is a body there is misery, this is also the direct experience of all people; therefore, one should enquire into one's true nature which is ever bodiless, and one should remain as such. This is the means to gaining that state.

2

D: What is meant by saying that one should enquire into one's true nature and understand it?

M: Experiences such as, 'I went; I came; I was; I did' come naturally to everyone. From these experiences, does it not appear that the consciousness 'I' is the subject of those various acts? Enquiry into the true nature of that consciousness, and remaining as oneself is the way to understand, through enquiry, one's true nature.

3

D: How is one to enquire 'Who am I?'

M: Actions such as 'going' and 'coming' belong only to the body. And so, when one says, 'I went, I came', it amounts to saying that the body is 'I'. But, can the body be said to be the consciousness 'I', since the body was not before it was born, is made up of the five elements, is nonexistent in the state of deep sleep, and becomes a corpse when dead? Can this body which is inert like a log of wood be said to shine as

'I-I'? Therefore, the 'I-consciousness' which at first arises in respect of the body is referred to variously as self-conceit *(tarbodham)*, egoity *(ahankara)*, nescience *(avidya)*, *maya*, impurity *(mala)*, and individual soul *(jiva)*. Can we remain without enquiring into this? Is it not for our redemption through enquiry that all the scriptures declare that the destruction of 'self-conceit' is release *(mukti)*? Therefore, making the corpse-body remain as a corpse, and not even uttering the word 'I', one should enquire keenly thus: "Now, what is it that rises as 'I'?" Then, there would shine in the Heart a kind of wordless illumination of the form 'I-I'. That is, there would shine of its own accord the pure consciousness which is unlimited and one, the limited and the many thoughts having disappeared. If one remains quiescent without abandoning that (experience), the egoity, the individual sense, of the form 'I am the body' will be totally destroyed, and at the end the final thought, viz., the 'I-form' also will be quenched like the fire that burns camphor.[1] The great sages and scriptures declare that this alone is release.

4

D: When one enquires into the root of 'self-conceit' which is of the form 'I', all sorts of different thoughts without number seem to rise; and not any separate 'I' thought.

M: Whether the nominative case, which is the first case, appears or not, the sentences in which the other cases appear have as their basis the first case; similarly, all the thoughts that appear in the Heart have as their basis the egoity which is the first mental mode 'I', the cognition of the form 'I am the body'; thus, it is the rise of egoity that is the cause and source of the rise of all other thoughts; therefore, if the self-conceit

[1] That is, without leaving any sediment.

of the form of egoity which is the root of the illusory tree of *samsara* (bondage consisting of transmigration) is destroyed, all other thoughts will perish completely like an uprooted tree. Whatever thoughts arise as obstacles to one's *sadhana* (spiritual discipline), the mind should not be allowed to go in their direction, but should be made to rest in one's Self which is the *Atman*; one should remain as witness to whatever happens, adopting the attitude 'Let whatever strange things happen, happen; let us see!' This should be one's practice. In other words, one should not identify oneself with appearances; one should never relinquish one's Self. This is the proper means for destruction of the mind *(manonasa)* which is of the nature of seeing the body as Self, and which is the cause of all the aforesaid obstacles. This method which easily destroys egoity deserves to be called devotion *(bhakti)*, meditation *(dhyana)*, concentration (yoga), and knowledge *(jnana)*. Because God remains of the nature of the Self, shining as 'I' in the Heart, because the scriptures declare that thought itself is bondage, the best discipline is to stay quiescent without ever forgetting Him (God, the Self), after resolving in Him the mind which is of the form of the 'I-thought', no matter by what means. This is the conclusive teaching of the scriptures.

5

D: Is enquiry the only means for removal of the false belief of selfhood in the gross body, or is it also the means for removal of the false belief of selfhood in the subtle and causal bodies?

M: It is on the gross body that the other bodies subsist. In the false belief of the form 'I am the body' are included all the three bodies consisting of the five sheaths. And destruction of the false belief of selfhood in the gross body is itself the destruction of the false belief of selfhood in the other bodies.

So enquiry is the means to removal of the false belief of selfhood in all the three bodies.

6

D: While there are different modifications of the internal organ, viz., manas *(reflection),* buddhi *(intellect),* chitta *(memory) and* ahankara *(egoity), how can it be said that the destruction of the mind alone is release?*

M: In the books explaining the nature of the mind, it is thus stated: "The mind is formed by the concretion of the subtle portion of the food we eat; it grows with the passions such as attachment and aversion, desire and anger; being the aggregate of mind, intellect, memory and egoity, it receives the collective singular name 'mind'; the characteristics that it bears are thinking, determining, etc.; since it is an object of consciousness (the self), it is what is seen, inert; even though inert, it appears as if conscious because of association with consciousness (like a red-hot iron ball); it is limited, non-eternal, partite, and changing like lac, gold, wax, etc.; it is of the nature of all elements (of phenomenal existence); its locus is the Heart-lotus, even as the loci of the sense of sight, etc., are the eyes, etc.; it is the adjunct of the individual soul; thinking of an object, it transforms itself into a mode, and along with the knowledge that is in the brain, it flows through the five sense-channels, gets joined to objects by the brain (that is associated with knowledge), and thus knows and experiences objects and gains satisfaction. That substance is the mind." Even as one and the same person is called by different names according to the different functions he performs, so also one and the same mind is called by the different names: mind, intellect, memory, and egoity, on account of the difference in the modes — and not because of

any real difference. The mind itself is of the form of all, i.e., of soul, God and world; when it becomes of the form of the Self through knowledge there is release, which is of the nature of *Brahman*: this is the teaching.

7

D: If these four — mind, intellect, memory and egoity — are one and the same why are separate locations mentioned for them?

M: It is true that the throat is stated to be the location of the mind, the face or the heart of the intellect, the navel of the memory, and the Heart or *sarvanga* of the egoity; though differently stated thus yet, for the aggregate of these, that is the mind or internal organ, the location is the Heart alone. This is conclusively declared in the scriptures.

8

D: Why is it said that only the mind which is the internal organ, shines as the form of all, that is of soul, God and world?

M: As instruments for knowing the objects the sense organs are outside, and so they are called outer senses; and the mind is called the inner sense because it is inside. But the distinction between inner and outer is only with reference to the body; in truth, there is neither inner nor outer. The mind's nature is to remain pure like ether. What is referred to as the Heart or the mind is the collocation of the elements (of phenomenal existence) that appear as inner and outer. So there is no doubt that all phenomena consisting of names and forms are of the nature of mind alone. All that appear outside are in reality inside and not outside; it is in order to teach this that in the Vedas also all have been described as of the nature of the Heart. What is called the Heart is no other than *Brahman*.

9

D: How can it be said that the Heart is no other than Brahman*?*

M: Although the self enjoys its experiences in the states of waking, dream, and deep sleep, residing respectively in the eyes, throat and Heart, in reality, however, it never leaves its principal seat, the Heart. In the Heart-lotus which is of the nature of all, in other words in the mind-ether, the light of that Self in the form 'I' shines. As it shines thus in everybody, this very Self is referred to as the witness (*sakshi*) and the transcendent (*turiya*, literally the fourth). The 'I-less' Supreme *Brahman* which shines in all bodies as interior to the light in the form 'I' is the Self-ether (or knowledge-ether): that alone is the Absolute Reality. This is the super-transcendent *(turiyatita)*. Therefore, it is stated that what is called the Heart is no other than *Brahman*. Moreover, for the reason that *Brahman* shines in the hearts of all souls as the Self, the name 'Heart' is given to *Brahman*.[2] The meaning of the word *hridayam*, when split thus *'hrit-ayam'*, is in fact *Brahman*. The adequate evidence for the fact that *Brahman*, which shines as the Self, resides in the hearts of all is that all people indicate themselves by pointing to the chest when saying 'I'.

10

D: If the entire universe is of the form of mind, then does it not follow that the universe is an illusion? If that be the case, why is the creation of the universe mentioned in the Vedas?

M: There is no doubt whatsoever that the universe is the merest illusion. The principal purport of the Vedas is to make known the true *Brahman*, after showing the apparent universe

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[2] In the Hearts of all individual souls, that which shines is *Brahman* and hence is called the Heart — *Brahma Gita*.

to be false. It is for this purpose that the Vedas admit the creation of the world and not for any other reason. Moreover, for the less qualified persons creation is taught, that is the phased evolution of *prakriti* (primal nature), *mahat tattva* (the great intellect), *tanmatras* (the subtle essences), *bhutas* (the gross elements), the world, the body, etc., from *Brahman*; while for the more qualified simultaneous creation is taught, that is, that this world arose like a dream on account of one's own thoughts induced by the defect of not knowing oneself as the Self. Thus, from the fact that the creation of the world has been described in different ways it is clear that the purport of the Vedas rests only in teaching the true nature of *Brahman* after showing somehow or other the illusory nature of the universe. That the world is illusory, everyone can directly know in the state of Realization which is in the form of experience of one's bliss-nature.

11

D: Is Self-experience possible for the mind, whose nature is constant change?

M: Since *sattva guna* (the constituent of *prakriti* which makes for purity, intelligence, etc.) is the nature of mind, and since the mind is pure and undefiled like ether, what is called mind is, in truth, of the nature of knowledge. When it stays in that natural (i.e. pure) state, it has not even the name 'mind'. It is only the erroneous knowledge which mistakes one for another that is called mind. What was (originally) the pure *sattva* mind, of the nature of pure knowledge, forgets its knowledge-nature on account of nescience, gets transformed into the world under the influence of *tamo guna* (i.e. the constituent of *prakriti* which makes for dullness, inertness, etc.), being under the influence of *rajo guna* (i.e. the constituent of *prakriti* which makes for activity, passions, etc.),

imagines 'I am the body, etc.; the world is real', it acquires the consequent merit and demerit through attachment, aversion, etc., and, through the residual impressions *(vasanas)* thereof, attains birth and death. But the mind, which has got rid of its defilement (sin) through action without attachment performed in many past lives, listens to the teaching of scripture from a true guru, reflects on its meaning, and meditates in order to gain the natural state of the mental mode of the form of the Self, i.e., of the form 'I am *Brahman*' which is the result of the continued contemplation of *Brahman*. Thus will be removed the mind's transformation into the world in the aspect of *tamo guna,* and its roving therein the aspect of *rajo guna.* When this removal takes place the mind becomes subtle and unmoving. It is only by the mind that is impure and is under the influence of *rajas* and *tamas* that Reality (i.e., the Self) which is very subtle and unchanging cannot be experienced; just as a piece of fine silk cloth cannot be stitched with a heavy crowbar, or as the details of subtle objects cannot be distinguished by the light of a lamp flame that flickers in the wind. But in the pure mind that has been rendered subtle and unmoving by the meditation described above, the Self-bliss (i.e., *Brahman*) will become manifest. As without mind there cannot be experience, it is possible for the purified mind endowed with the extremely subtle mode *(vritti)* to experience the Self-bliss, by remaining in that form (i.e. in the form of *Brahman*). Then, that one's Self is of the nature of *Brahman* will be clearly experienced.

12

D: Is the aforesaid Self-experience possible, even in the state of empirical existence, for the mind which has to perform functions in accordance with its prarabdha *(the past karma which has begun to fructify)?*

M: A *brahmin* may play various parts in a drama; yet the thought that he is a *brahmin* does not leave his mind. Similarly, when one is engaged in various empirical acts there should be the firm conviction 'I am the Self', without allowing the false idea 'I am the body, etc.' to rise. If the mind should stray away from its state, then immediately one should enquire, 'Oh! Oh! We are not the body, etc. Who are we?' and thus one should reinstate the mind in that (pure) state. The enquiry 'Who am I?' is the principal means to the removal of all misery and the attainment of the supreme bliss. When in this manner the mind becomes quiescent in its own state, Self-experience arises of its own accord, without any hindrance. Thereafter sensory pleasures and pains will not affect the mind. All (phenomena) will appear then, without attachment, like a dream. Never forgetting one's plenary Self-experience is real *bhakti* (devotion), yoga (mind control), *jnana* (knowledge) and all other austerities. Thus say the sages.

13

D: When there is activity in regard to works, we are neither the agents of those works nor their enjoyers. The activity is of the three instruments (i.e., the mind, speech, and body). Could we remain (unattached) thinking thus?

M: After the mind has been made to stay in the Self which is its deity, and has been rendered indifferent to empirical matters because it does not stray away from the Self, how can the mind think as mentioned above? Do not such thoughts constitute bondage? When such thoughts arise due to residual impressions *(vasanas)*, one should restrain the mind from flowing that way, endeavour to retain it in the Self-state, and make it turn indifferent to empirical matters. One should not give room in the mind for such thoughts as: 'Is this good? Or, is that good? Can this be done? Or, can that be done?' One

should be vigilant even before such thoughts arise and make the mind stay in its native state. If any little room is given, such a (disturbed) mind will do harm to us while posing as our friend; like the foe appearing to be a friend, it will topple us down. Is it not because one forgets one's Self that such thoughts arise and cause more and more evil? While it is true that to think through discrimination, 'I do not do anything; all actions are performed by the instruments', is a means to prevent the mind from flowing along thought *vasanas*, does it not also follow that only if the mind flows along thought *vasanas* that it must be restrained through discrimination as stated before? Can the mind that remains in the Self-state think as 'I' and as 'I behave empirically thus and thus'? In all manner of ways possible one should endeavour gradually not to forget one's (true) Self that is God. If that is accomplished, all will be accomplished. The mind should not be directed to any other matter. Even though one may perform, like a mad person, the actions that are the result of *prarabdha karma*, one should retain the mind in the Self-state without letting the thought 'I do' arise. Have not countless *bhaktas* (devotees) performed their numerous empirical functions with an attitude of indifference?

14

D: What is the real purport of sannyasa *(renunciation)?*

M: *Sannyasa* is only the renunciation of the 'I-thought', and not the rejection of the external objects. He who has renounced (the 'I-thought') thus, remains the same whether he is alone or in the midst of the extensive *samsara* (empirical world). Just as when the mind is concentrated on some object, it does not observe other things even though they may be proximate, so also, although the sage may perform any number of empirical acts, in reality he performs nothing,

because he makes the mind rest in the Self without letting the 'I-thought' arise. Even as in a dream one appears to fall head downwards, while in reality one is unmoving, so also the ignorant person, i.e., the person for whom the 'I-thought' has not ceased, although he remains alone in constant meditation, is in fact one who performs all empirical actions.[3] Thus the wise ones have said.

15

D: The mind, sense-organs, etc., have the ability to perceive; yet why are they regarded as perceived objects?

M:

	Drik (Knower)	*Drisya* (Known object)
1	The seer	Pot (i.e., the seen object)
	Further,	
2	The eye organ	Body, Pot, etc.
3	The sense of sight	The eye organ
4	The mind	The sense of sight
5	The individual soul	The mind
6	Consciousness (the Self)	The individual soul

As shown in the above scheme, since we, the consciousness, know all objects, we are said to be *drik* (knower). The categories including pot, etc., are the objects seen, since they are what are known. In the table of 'knowledge: ignorance (i.e., knower-known)' given above, among the knowers and

[3] Like those who listen to a story with their attention fixed elsewhere, the mind whose residual impressions have worn away does not really function even if it appears to do so. The mind that is not free from residual impressions really functions even if it does not appear to do so; this is like those who while remaining stationary imagine in their dreams that they climb up a hill and fall therefrom — *Reality in Forty Verses: Supplement*, v. 30

objects of knowledge, it is seen that one is knower in relation to another; yet, since that one is object in relation to another, none of those categories is, in reality, the knower. Although we are said to be the 'knower' because we know all, and not the 'known' because we are not known by anything else, we are said to be the 'knower' only in relation to the known objects. In truth, however, what is called the 'known' is not apart from us. And so we are the Reality that transcends those two (the knower and the known). All the others fall within the knower-known categories.

16

D: How do egoity, soul, self, and Brahman *come to be identified?*

M:

	The Example	*The Exemplified*
1	The iron-ball	Egoity
2	The heated iron-ball	The soul which appears as a superimposition on the Self
3	The fire that is in the heated iron-ball	The light of consciousness, i.e. the immutable *Brahman*, which shines in the soul in every body
4	The flame of fire which remains as one	The all pervading *Brahman* which remains as one

From the example given above, it will be clear how egoity, soul, witness, and all-witness come to be identified.

Just as in the wax lump that is with the smith numerous and varied metal particles lie included and all of them appear to be one wax lump, so also in deep sleep the gross and subtle bodies

of all the individual souls are included in the cosmic *maya* which is nescience, of the nature of sheer darkness, and since the souls are resolved in the Self becoming one with It, they see everywhere darkness alone. From the darkness of sleep, the subtle body, viz. egoity, and from that (egoity) the gross body arise respectively. Even as the egoity arises, it appears superimposed on the nature of the Self, like the heated iron-ball. Thus, without the soul *(jiva)* which is the mind or egoity that is conjoined with the Consciousness-light, there is no witness of the soul, viz. the Self, and without the Self there is no *Brahman* that is the all-witness. Just as when the iron-ball is beaten into various shapes by the smith, the fire that is in it does not change thereby in any manner, even so the soul may be involved in ever so many experiences and undergo pleasures and pains, and yet the Self-light that is in it does not change in the least thereby, and like the ether it is the all-pervasive pure knowledge that is one, and it shines in the Heart as *Brahman*.

17

D: How is one to know that in the Heart the Self itself shines as Brahman*?*

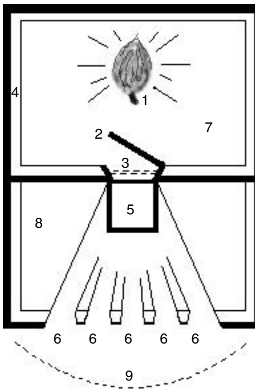
M: Just as the elemental ether within the flame of a lamp is known to fill without any difference and without any limit both the inside and the outside of the flame, so also the knowledge-ether that is within the Self-light in the Heart fills without any difference and without any limit both the inside and the outside of that Self-light. This is what is referred to as *Brahman*.

18

D: How do the three states of experience, the three bodies, etc., which are imaginations, appear in the Self-light which is one, unitary and self-luminous? Even if they should appear, how is one to know that the Self alone remains ever unmoving?

M:

The Example	*The Exemplified*
1 The lamp	The Self
2 The door	Sleep
3 The doorstep	*Mahat tattva*
4 The inner wall	Nescience or the causal body
5 The mirror	The egoity
6 The windows	The five cognitive sense organs
7. The inner chamber	Deep sleep in which the causal body is manifest
8. The middle chamber	Dream in which the subtle body is manifest
9. The outer court	Waking state in which the gross body is manifest



The Self which is the lamp (1) shines of its own accord in the inner chamber, i.e., the causal body (7) that is endowed with nescience as the inner wall (4) and sleep as the door (2); when by the vital principle as conditioned by time, *karma*,

etc., the sleep-door is opened, there occurs a reflection of the Self in the egoity-mirror (5) that is placed next to the doorstep — *mahat tattva* (3); the egoity-mirror thus illumines the middle chamber, i.e., the dream state (8), and, through the windows which are the five cognitive sense-organs (6), the outer court, i.e., the waking state (9). When, again, by the vital principle as conditioned by time, *karma*, etc., the sleep-door gets shut, the egoity ceases along with waking and dream, and the Self alone ever shines. The example just given explains how the Self is unmoving, how there is difference between the Self and the egoity and how the three states of experience, the three bodies, etc., appear.

19

D: Although I have listened to the explanation of the characteristics of enquiry in such great detail, my mind has not gained even a little peace. What is the reason for this?

M: The reason is the absence of strength or one-pointedness of the mind.

20

D: What is the reason for the absence of mental strength?

M: The means that make one qualified for enquiry are meditation, yoga, etc. One should gain proficiency in these through graded practice, and thus secure a stream of mental modes that is natural and helpful. When the mind that has become ripe in this manner, hears about this enquiry, it will at once realize its true nature which is the Self, and remain in perfect peace, without deviating from that state. To a mind which has not become ripe, immediate realization and peace are hard to gain through hearing about the enquiry. Yet, if one practises the means for mind control for some time, peace of mind can be obtained eventually.

21

D: Of the means for mind control, which is the most important?

M: Breath control is the means for mind control.

22

D: How is breath to be controlled?

M: Breath can be controlled either by absolute retention of breath *(kevala kumbhaka)* or by regulation of breath *(pranayama)*.

23

D: What is absolute retention of breath?

M: It is making the vital air stay firmly in the Heart, even without exhalation and inhalation. This is achieved through meditation on the vital principle, etc.

24

D: What is regulation of breath?

M: It is making the vital air stay firmly in the Heart through exhalation, inhalation and retention, according to the instructions given in the yoga texts.

25

D: How is breath control the means for mind control?

M: There is no doubt that breath control is the means for mind control, because the mind, like breath, is a part of air, because the nature of mobility is common to both, because the place of origin is the same for both, and because when one of them is controlled the other gets controlled.

26

D: Since breath control leads only to quiescence of the mind (manolaya) *and not to its destruction* (manonasa)*, how*

can it be said that breath control is the means for enquiry which aims at the destruction of mind?

M: The scriptures teach the means for gaining Self-realization in two modes — as the yoga with eight limbs *(ashtanga* yoga*)* and as knowledge with eight limbs *(ashtanga jnana)*. By regulation of breath *(pranayama)* or by absolute retention thereof *(kevala kumbhaka)*, which is one of the limbs of yoga, the mind gets controlled. Without leaving the mind at that, if one practises the further discipline such as withdrawal of the mind from external objects *(pratyahara)*, then at the end, Self-realization which is the fruit of enquiry will surely be gained.

27

D: What are the limbs of yoga?

M: *Yama*, *niyama*, *asana*, *pranayama*, *pratyahara*, *dharana*, *dhyana*, and *samadhi*. Of these —

(1) *Yama*: This stands for the cultivation of such principles of good conduct as nonviolence *(ahimsa)*, truth *(satya)*, non-stealing *(asteya)*, celibacy *(Brahmacharya)*, and non-possession *(aparigraha)*.

(2) *Niyama*: This stands for the observance of such rules of good conduct as purity *(saucha)*, contentment *(santosha)*, austerity *(tapas)*, study of the sacred texts *(svadhyaya)*, and devotion to God *(Isvarapranidhana)*.[4]

(3) *Asana*: Of the different postures, eighty-four are the main ones. Of these, again, four, viz., *simha*, *bhadra*, *padma*, and *siddha*[5] are said to be excellent. Of these too,

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[4] The Aim of *yama* and *niyama* is the attainment of all good paths open to those eligible for *moksha*. For more details see works like the *Yoga Sutra* and *Hathayoga Dipika*.

[5] *Siddhasana*: Left heel should be placed over genital organ and over that, the right heel. Fixing the gaze between the eyebrows, the body should remain motionless and erect like a stick.

it is only *siddha*, that is the most excellent. Thus the yoga texts declare.

(4) *Pranayama*: According to the measures prescribed in the sacred texts, exhaling the vital air is *rechaka*, inhaling is *puraka* and retaining it in the Heart is *kumbhaka*. As regards 'measure', some texts say that *rechaka* and *puraka* should be equal in measure, and *kumbhaka* twice that measure, while other texts say that if *rechaka* is one measure, *puraka* should be of two measures, and *kumbhaka* of four. By 'measure' what is meant is the time that would be taken for the utterance of the *Gayatri mantra* once. Thus *pranayama* consisting of *rechaka*, *puraka*, and *kumbhaka*, should be practised daily according to ability, slowly and gradually. Then, there would arise for the mind a desire to rest in happiness without moving. After this, one should practise *pratyahara*.

(5) *Pratyahara*: This is regulating the mind by preventing it from flowing towards the external names and forms. The mind, which had been till then distracted, now becomes controlled. The aids in this respect are (1) meditation on the *pranava*, (2) fixing the attention betwixt the eyebrows, (3) looking at the tip of the nose, and (4) reflection on the *nada*. The mind that has thus become one-pointed will be fit to stay in one place. After this, *dharana* should be practised.

(6) *Dharana*: This is fixing the mind in a locus which is fit for meditation. The *loci* that are eminently fit for meditation are the Heart and *Brahmarandhra* (aperture in the crown of the head). One should think that in the middle of the eight-petalled lotus[6] that is at this place, there shines, like a

[6] Although it is true that the lotus in the crown of the head is said to have a thousand petals, it also may be described as having eight petals because each of these eight consists of 125 sub-petals.

flame, the Deity which is the Self, i.e., *Brahman*, and fix the mind therein. After this, one should meditate.

(7) *Dhyana*: This is meditation, through the 'I am He' thought, that one is not different from the nature of the aforesaid flame. Even, thus, if one makes the enquiry 'Who am I?', then, as the scripture declares, 'The *Brahman* which is everywhere shines in the Heart as the Self that is the witness of the intellect', one would realize that it is the Divine Self that shines in the Heart as 'I-I'. This mode of reflection is the best meditation.

(8) *Samadhi*: As a result of the fruition of the aforesaid meditation, the mind gets resolved in the object of meditation without harbouring the ideas 'I am such and such; I am doing this and this'. This subtle state in which even the thought 'I-I' disappears is *samadhi*. If one practises this everyday, seeing to it that sleep does not supervene, God will soon confer on one the supreme state of quiescence of mind.

28

D: What is the purport of the teaching that in pratyahara *one should meditate on the* pranava*?*

M: The purport of prescribing meditation on the *pranava* is this. The *pranava* is *Omkara* consisting of three and a half *matras*, viz., *a*, *u*, *m*, and *ardha matra*. Of these, *a* stands for the waking state, *Visva jiva*, and the gross body; *u* stands for the dream state, *Taijasa jiva*, and the subtle body; *m* stands for the sleep state, *Prajna jiva*, and the causal body; the *ardha matra* represents the *Turiya* which is the self or 'I-nature'; and what is beyond that is the state of *Turiyatita*, or pure Bliss. The fourth state which is the state of 'I-nature' was referred to in the section on meditation *(dhyana)*. This has been variously described — as of the nature of *amatra* which

includes the three *matras*, *a*, *u*, and *m;* as *maunakshara* (silence-syllable); as *ajapa* (as muttering without muttering) and as the *advaita mantra* which is the essence of all *mantras* such as *Panchakshara*. In order to get at this true significance, one should meditate on the *pranava*. This is meditation which is of the nature of devotion consisting in reflection on the truth of the Self. The fruition of this process is *samadhi* which yields release, which is the state of unsurpassed bliss. The revered Gurus also have said that release is to be gained only by devotion which is of the nature of reflection on the truth of the Self.

29

D: What is the purport of teaching that one should meditate, through the 'I am He' thought, on the truth that one is not different from the self-luminous Reality that shines like a flame?

M: (a) The purport of teaching that one should cultivate the idea that one is not different from the self-luminous Reality is this: Scripture defines meditation in these words, 'In the middle of the eight petalled Heart lotus which is of the nature of all, and which is referred to as Kailasa, Vaikunta, and Paramapada, there is the Reality which is of the size of the thumb, which is dazzling like lightning and which shines like a flame. By meditating on it, a person gains immortality.' From this we should know that by such meditation one avoids the defects of (1) the thought of difference, of the form 'I am different, and that is different', (2) the meditation on what is limited, (3) the idea that the Real is limited, and (4) that it is confined to one place.

(b) The purport of teaching that one should meditate with the 'I am He' (*sahaham*, *Soham*) thought is this: *sah* is the supreme Self, *aham* is the Self that is manifest as 'I'. The *jiva*

which is the *Sivalinga* resides in the Heart-lotus which is its seat situated in the body which is the city of *Brahman*; the mind which is of the nature of egoity, goes outward identifying itself with the body, etc. Now, the mind should be resolved in the Heart, i.e., the I-sense that is placed in the body, etc., should be got rid of; when one thus enquires 'Who am I?', remaining undisturbed, in that state, the Self-nature becomes manifest in a subtle manner as 'I-I'; that Self-nature is all and yet none, and is manifest as the supreme Self everywhere without the distinction of inner and outer; that shines like a flame, as was stated above, signifying the truth 'I am *Brahman*'. If, without meditating on that as being identical with oneself, one imagines it to be different, ignorance will not leave. Hence, the identity-meditation is prescribed.

If one meditates for a long time, without disturbance, on the Self ceaselessly, with the 'I am He' thought which is the technique of reflection on the Self, the darkness of ignorance which is in the Heart and all the impediments which are but the effects of ignorance will be removed, and the plenary wisdom will be gained.[7]

Thus, realizing the Reality in the Heart-cave which is in the city (of *Brahman*), viz. the body, is the same as realizing the all-perfect God.

In the city with nine gates, which is the body, the wise one resides at ease.[8]

The body is the temple; the *jiva* is God (Siva). If one worships him with the 'I am He' thought, one will gain release.

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[7] "If meditation in the form 'I am Siva' (*Sivoham bhavana),* which prevents the thought going outwards, is practised always, *samadhi* will come about."
—*Vallalar*

[8] "In the city that has nine false gates, He resides in the form of bliss."
—*Bhagavad Gita*

The body which consists of the five sheaths is the cave, the Supreme that resides there is the Lord of the cave. Thus the scriptures declare.

Since the Self is the reality of all the gods, the meditation on the Self which is oneself is the greatest of all meditations. All other meditations are included in this. It is for gaining this that the other meditations are prescribed. So, if this is gained, the others are not necessary. Knowing one's Self is knowing God. Without knowing one's Self that meditates, imagining that there is a deity which is different and meditating on it, is compared by the great ones to the act of measuring with one's foot one's own shadow, and to the search for a trivial conch after throwing away a priceless gem that is already in one's possession.[9]

30

D: Even though the Heart and the Brahmarandhra *alone are the loci fit for meditation, could one meditate, if necessary, on the six mystic centres* (adharas)*?*

M: The six mystic centres, etc., which are said to be loci of meditation, are but products of imagination. All these are meant for beginners in yoga. With reference to meditation on the six centres, the *Sivayogins* say, 'God, who is of the nature of the non-dual, plenary, Consciousness-Self, manifests, sustains and resolves us all. It is a great sin to spoil that Reality by superimposing on it various names and forms such as Ganapati, Brahma, Vishnu, Rudra, Maheswara and Sadasiva', and the *Vedantins* declare, 'All those are but imaginations of

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[9] "We shall meditate on that which, existing in the form of Self, is the *atma tattva*, is effulgent, and which residing in all living things always says 'I', 'I'. To seek for a God outside, leaving the God residing in the cave of the Heart, is like throwing away a priceless gem and searching for a trivial bead." —*Yoga Vasishta*

the mind.' Therefore, if one knows one's Self which is of the nature of consciousness that knows everything, one knows everything. The great ones have also said: 'When that One is known as it is in Itself, all that has not been known becomes known.' If we who are endowed with various thoughts meditate on God that is the Self, we would get rid of the plurality of thoughts by that one thought; then, even that one thought would vanish. This is what is meant by saying that knowing one's Self is knowing God. This knowledge is release.

31

D: How is one to think of the Self?

M: The Self is self-luminous without darkness and light, and is the reality which is self-manifest. Therefore, one should not think of it as this or as that. The very thought of thinking will end in bondage. The purport of meditation on the Self is to make the mind take the form of the Self. In the middle of the Heart-cave the pure *Brahman* is directly manifest as the Self in the form of 'I-I'. Can there be greater ignorance than to think of it in manifold ways, without knowing it as aforementioned?

32

D: It was stated that Brahman *is manifest as the Self in the form of 'I-I', in the Heart. To facilitate an understanding of this statement, can it be still further explained?*

M: Is it not within the experience of all that during deep sleep, swoon, etc., there is no knowledge whatsoever, i.e., neither Self-knowledge nor other-knowledge? Afterwards, when there is experience of the form 'I have woken up from sleep' or 'I have recovered from swoon' — is that not a mode of specific knowledge that has arisen from the aforementioned distinctionless state? This specific knowledge is called *vijnana*.

This *vijnana* becomes manifest only as pertaining to either the Self or the not-self, and not by itself. When it pertains to the Self, it is called true knowledge, knowledge in the form of that mental mode whose object is the Self, or knowledge which has for its content the unitary (Self); and when it relates to the not-self, it is called ignorance. The state of this *vijnana*, when it pertains to the Self and is manifest as of the form of the Self, is said to be the 'I-manifestation'. This manifestation cannot take place as apart from the Real (i.e., the Self). It is this manifestation that serves as the mark for the direct experience of the Real. Yet, this by itself cannot constitute the state of being the Real. That, depending on which this manifestation takes place is the basic Reality which is also called *prajnana*. The Vedantic text *'prajnanam brahma'* teaches the same truth.

Know this as the purport of the scripture also. The Self which is self-luminous and the witness of everything manifests itself as residing in the *vijnanakosa* (sheath of the intellect). By the mental mode which is impartite, seize this Self as your goal and enjoy it as the Self.

33

D: What is that which is called the inner worship or worship of the attributeless?

M: In texts such as the *Ribhu Gita*, the worship of the attributeless has been elaborately explained (as a separate discipline). Yet, all disciplines such as sacrifice, charity, austerity, observance of vows, *japa*, yoga and *puja*, are, in effect, modes of meditation of the form 'I am *Brahman*'. So, in all the modes of disciplines, one should see to it that one does not stray away from the thought 'I am *Brahman*'. This is the purport of the worship of the attributeless.

34

D: What are the eight limbs of knowledge (jnana ashtanga)*?*

M: The eight limbs are those which have been already mentioned, viz., *yama*, *niyama* etc., but differently defined:

(1) *Yama*: This is controlling the aggregate of sense-organs, realizing the defects that are present in the world consisting of the body, etc.

(2) *Niyama*: This is maintaining a stream of mental modes that relate to the Self and rejecting the contrary modes. In other words, it means love that arises uninterruptedly for the Supreme Self.

(3) *Asana*: That with the help of which constant meditation on *Brahman* is made possible with ease is *asana*.

(4) *Pranayama*: *Rechaka* (exhalation) is removing the two unreal aspects of name and form from the objects constituting the world, the body etc., *puraka* (inhalation) is grasping the three real aspects, existence, consciousness and bliss, which are constant in those objects, and *kumbhaka* is retaining those aspects thus grasped.

(5) *Pratyahara*: This is preventing name and form which have been removed from re-entering the mind.

(6) *Dharana*: This is making the mind stay in the Heart, without straying outward, and realizing that one is the Self itself which is Existence-Consciousness-Bliss.

(7) *Dhyana*: This is meditation of the form ‘I am only pure consciousness’. That is, after leaving aside the body which consists of five sheaths, one enquires ‘Who am I?’, and as a result of that, one stays as ‘I’ which shines as the Self.

(8) *Samadhi*: When the 'I-manifestation' also ceases, there is (subtle) direct experience. This is *samadhi*.

For *pranayama*, etc., detailed here, the disciplines such as *asana*, etc., mentioned in connection with yoga are not necessary. The limbs of knowledge may be practised at all places and at all times. Of yoga and knowledge, one may follow whichever is pleasing to one, or both, according to circumstances. The great teachers say that forgetfulness is the root of all evil, and is death for those who seek release,[10] so one should rest the mind in one's Self and should never forget the Self: this is the aim. If the mind is controlled, all else can be controlled. The distinction between yoga with eight limbs and knowledge with eight limbs has been set forth elaborately in the sacred texts; so only the substance of this teaching has been given here.

35

D: Is it possible to practise at the same time the pranayama *belonging to yoga and the pranayama pertaining to knowledge?*

M: So long as the mind has not been made to rest in the Heart, either through absolute retention *(kevala kumbhaka)* or through enquiry, *rechaka, puraka* etc., are needed. Hence, the *pranayama* of yoga is to be practised during training, and the other *pranayama* may be practised always. Thus, both may be practised. It is enough if the *yogic pranayama* is practised till skill is gained in absolute retention.

36

D: Why should the path to release be differently taught? Will it not create confusion in the minds of aspirants?

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[10] "Death or *Kala* is the giving up on this earth of the contemplation of the Self which should never be given up even the least bit." — *Vivekachudamani*

M: Several paths are taught in the Vedas to suit the different grades of qualified aspirants. Yet, since release is but the destruction of the mind, all efforts have for their aim the control of mind. Although the modes of meditation may appear to be different from one another, in the end all of them become one. There is no need to doubt this. One may adopt that path which suits the maturity of one's mind.

The control of *prana* which is yoga, and the control of mind which is *jnana*[11] — these are the two principal means for the destruction of the mind. To some, the former may appear easy, and to others the latter. Yet, *jnana* is like subduing a turbulent bull by coaxing it with green grass, while yoga is like controlling it through the use of force. Thus the wise ones say that of the three grades of qualified aspirants, the highest reach the goal by making the mind firm in the Self through determining the nature of the real by *Vedantic* enquiry and by looking upon one's self and all things as of the nature of the Real; the mediocre by making the mind stay in the Heart through *kevala kumbhaka* and meditating for a long time on the Real; and the lowest grade, by gaining that state in a gradual manner through breath-control, etc.

The mind should be made to rest in the Heart till the destruction of the 'I-thought' which is of the form of ignorance, residing in the Heart. This itself is *jnana*; this alone is *dhyana* also. The rest are a mere digression of words, digression of the texts. Thus the scriptures proclaim. Therefore, if one gains the skill of retaining the mind in one's Self through some means or other, one need not worry about other matters.

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[11] Seeing everything as Real according to the scripture: I am *Brahman* — one only without a second.

The great teachers also have taught that the devotee is greater than the *yogi*[12] and that the means to release is devotion, which is of the nature of reflection on one's own Self.[13]

Thus, it is the path of realizing *Brahman* that is variously called *Dahara vidya*, *Brahma Vidya*, *Atma vidya,* etc. What more can be said than this? One should understand the rest by inference.

The scriptures teach in different modes. After analysing all those modes the great ones declare this to be the shortest and the best means.

37

D: By practising the disciplines taught above, one may get rid of the obstacles that are in the mind, viz., ignorance, doubt, error, etc., and thereby attain quiescence of mind. Yet, there is one last doubt. After the mind has been resolved in the Heart, there is only consciousness shining as the plenary reality. When thus the mind has assumed the form of the Self, who is there to enquire? Such enquiry would result in self-worship. It would be like the story of the shepherd searching for the sheep that was all the time on his shoulders!

M: The *jiva* itself is Siva; Siva Himself is the *jiva*. It is true that the *jiva* is no other than Siva. When the grain is hidden inside the husk, it is called paddy; when it is dehusked, it is called rice. Similarly, so long as one is bound by *karma* one remains a *jiva*; when the bond of ignorance is broken, one shines as Siva, the Deity. Thus declares a scriptural text. Accordingly, the *jiva* which is mind, is in reality the pure

[12] "Of all *yogins*, only he who rests his unwavering mind and love in me is dear to me." — *Bhagavad Gita*

[13] "Of the means to release only *bhakti* (devotion) may be said to be the highest. For, *bhakti* is constant reflection on one's own Self." — *Vivekachudamani*

Self; but, forgetting this truth, it imagines itself to be an individual soul and gets bound in the shape of mind. So its search for the Self, which is itself, is like the search for the sheep by the shepherd. But still, the *jiva* which has forgotten itself will not become the Self through mere mediate knowledge. By the impediment caused by the residual impressions gathered in previous births, the *jiva* forgets again and again its identity with the Self and gets deceived, identifying itself with the body, etc. Will a person become a high officer by merely looking at him? Is it not by steady effort in that direction that he could become a highly placed officer? Similarly, the *jiva*, which is in bondage through mental identification with the body, etc., should put forth effort in the form of reflection on the Self in a gradual and sustained manner; and when thus the mind gets destroyed, the *jiva* would become the Self.[14]

The reflection on the Self which is thus practised constantly will destroy the mind, and thereafter will destroy itself like the stick that is used to kindle the cinders burning a corpse. It is this state that is called release.

38

D: If the jiva *is by nature identical with the Self, what is it that prevents the jiva from realizing its true nature?*

M: It is forgetfulness of the *jiva's* true nature; this is known as the power of veiling.

39

D: If it is true that the jiva has forgotten itself, how does the 'I-experience' arise for all?

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[14] Though the obstacles which cause the bondage of birth may be many, the root-cause for all such changes is *ahankara*. This root-cause must be destroyed for ever — *Vivekachudamani*.

M: The veil does not completely hide the *jiva*;[15] it only hides the Self-nature of 'I' and projects the 'I am the body' notion; but it does not hide the Self's existence which is 'I', and which is real and eternal.

40

D: What are the characteristics of the jivanmukta *(the liberated in life) and the videhamukta (the liberated at death)?*

M: 'I am not the body. I am *Brahman* which is manifest as the Self. In me who am the plenary Reality,[16] the world consisting of bodies, etc., is a mere appearance, like the blue of the sky'. He who has realized the truth thus is a *jivanmukta*. Yet, so long as his mind has not been resolved, there may arise some misery for him because of relation to objects on account of *prarabdha (karma* which has begun to fructify and whose result is the present body), and as the movement of mind has not ceased there will not be also the experience of bliss. The experience of Self is possible only for the mind that has become subtle and unmoving as a result of prolonged meditation. He who is thus endowed with a mind that has become subtle, and who has the experience of the Self is called a *jivanmukta*. It is the state of *jivanmukti* that is referred to as the attributeless *Brahman* and as the *Turiya*. When even the subtle mind gets resolved, and experience of self ceases, and when one is immersed in the ocean of bliss and has become one with it without any differentiated existence, one is called a *videhamukta*. It is the state of *videhamukti* that is referred to as the transcendent attributeless *Brahman* and as the transcendent *Turiya*. This is the final goal. Because of the grades in misery and happiness, the released ones, the

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[15] Ignorance cannot hide the basic 'I', but it hides the specific truth that the *jiva* is the Supreme (Self) — *Kaivalya Navaneetha*.

[16] If there is prolonged meditation that the worlds are an appearance in me, who am the plenary Reality, where can ignorance stand? — *Kaivalya Navaneetha*.

jivanmuktas and *videhamuktas*, may be spoken of as belonging to four categories — *Brahmavid*, *Brahmavara*, *Brahmavariya* and *Brahmavarishtha*. But these distinctions are from the standpoint of the others who look at them; in reality, however, there are no distinctions in release gained through *jnana*.

OBEISANCE

May the Feet of Ramana, the Master,

who is the great Siva Himself

and is also in human form,

flourish for ever!

(Translated by Prof. T. M. P. Mahadevan)

2

Who am I?

Who am I? was written at the same period as Self-Enquiry. *It began as answers to certain questions asked by Sivaprakasam Pillai, one of the early devotees. The latter arranged and elaborated the questions and answers and submitted them for Bhagavan's approval. They were then published in the form of questions and answers but later changed into the form of a connected exposition. The original work has been adopted in the present edition.*

As all living beings desire to be happy always, without misery, as in the case of everyone there is observed supreme love for one's self, and as happiness alone is the cause for love, in order to gain that happiness which is one's nature and which is experienced in the state of deep sleep where there is no mind, one should know one's Self. For that, the path of knowledge, the enquiry of the form *'Who am I?'*, is the principal means.

1. *Who am I?*

The gross body which is composed of the seven humours (*dhatus*), I am not; the five cognitive sense organs, viz., the senses of hearing, touch, sight, taste, and smell, which apprehend their respective objects, viz., sound, touch, colour, taste, and odour, I am not; the five conative sense organs,

viz., the organs of speech, locomotion, grasping, excretion and procreation, which have as their respective functions, speaking, moving, grasping, excreting and enjoying, I am not; the five vital airs, *prana*, etc., which perform respectively the five functions of inbreathing, etc., I am not; even the mind which thinks, I am not; the nescience too, which is endowed only with the residual impressions of objects, and in which there are no objects and no functionings, I am not.

2. *If I am none of these, then Who am I?*

After negating all of the above mentioned as 'not this', 'not this', that Awareness which alone remains — that I am.

3. *What is the nature of Awareness?*

The nature of Awareness is Existence-Consciousness-Bliss.

4. *When will the realization of the Self be gained?*

When the world which is what-is-seen has been removed, there will be realization of the Self which is the seer.

5. *Will there not be realization of the Self even while the world is there (taken as real)*?

There will not be.

6. *Why?*

The seer and the object seen are like the rope and the snake. Just as the knowledge of the rope which is the substrate will not arise unless the false knowledge of the illusory serpent goes, so the realization of the Self which is the substrate will not be gained unless the belief that the world is real is removed.

7. *When will the world which is the object seen be removed?*

When the mind, which is the cause of all cognition and of all actions, becomes quiescent, the world will disappear.

8. *What is the nature of the mind?*

What is called 'mind' is a wondrous power residing in the Self. It causes all thoughts to arise. Apart from thoughts, there is no such thing as mind. Therefore, thought is the nature of mind. Apart from thoughts, there is no independent entity called the world. In deep sleep there are no thoughts, and there is no world. In the states of waking and dream, there are thoughts, and there is a world also. Just as the spider emits the thread (of the web) out of itself and again withdraws it into itself, likewise the mind projects the world out of itself and again resolves it into itself. When the mind comes out of the Self, the world appears. Therefore, when the world appears (to be real), the Self does not appear; and when the Self appears (shines) the world does not appear. When one persistently inquires into the nature of the mind, the mind will end leaving the Self (as the residue). What is referred to as the Self is the *Atman*. The mind always exists only in dependence on something gross; it cannot stay alone. It is the mind that is called the subtle body or the soul (*jiva*).

9. *What is the path of enquiry for understanding the nature of the mind?*

That which rises as 'I' in this body is the mind. If one inquires as to where in the body the thought 'I' rises first, one would discover that it rises in the Heart. That is the place of the mind's origin. Even if one thinks constantly 'I' 'I', one will be led to that place. Of all the thoughts that arise in the mind, the 'I-thought' is the first. It is only after the rise of this that the other thoughts arise. It is after the appearance of the first personal pronoun that the second and third personal pronouns appear; without the first personal pronoun there will not be the second and third.

10. *How will the mind become quiescent?*

By the enquiry 'Who am I?'. The thought 'Who am I?' will destroy all other thoughts, and like the stick used for stirring the burning pyre, it will itself in the end get destroyed. Then, there will arise Self-realization.

11. *What is the means for constantly holding on to the thought 'Who am I?'*

When other thoughts arise, one should not pursue them, but should inquire 'To whom do they arise?' It does not matter how many thoughts arise. As each thought arises, one should inquire with diligence, 'To whom has this thought arisen?'. The answer that would emerge would be 'To me'. Thereupon if one inquires 'Who am I?', the mind will go back to its source; and the thought that arose will become quiescent. With repeated practice in this manner, the mind will develop the skill to stay in its source. When the mind that is subtle goes out through the brain and the sense-organs, the gross names and forms appear; when it stays in the Heart, the names and forms disappear. Not letting the mind go out, but retaining it in the Heart is what is called 'inwardness' (*antarmukha*). Letting the mind go out of the Heart is known as 'externalisation' (*bahirmukha*). Thus, when the mind stays in the Heart, the 'I' which is the source of all thoughts will go, and the Self which ever exists will shine. Whatever one does, one should do without the egoity 'I'. If one acts in that way, all will appear as of the nature of Siva (God).

12. *Are there no other means for making the mind quiescent?*

Other than enquiry, there are no adequate means. If through other means it is sought to control the mind, the mind will appear to be controlled, but will again go forth. Through the control of breath also, the mind will become quiescent; but it

will be quiescent only so long as the breath remains controlled, and when the breath resumes the mind also will again start moving and will wander as impelled by residual impressions. The source is the same for both mind and breath. Thought, indeed, is the nature of the mind. The thought 'I' is the first thought of the mind; and that is egoity. It is from that whence egoity originates that breath also originates. Therefore, when the mind becomes quiescent, the breath is controlled, and when the breath is controlled the mind becomes quiescent. But in deep sleep, although the mind becomes quiescent, the breath does not stop. This is because of the will of God, so that the body may be preserved and other people may not be under the impression that it is dead. In the state of waking and in *samadhi*, when the mind becomes quiescent the breath is controlled. Breath is the gross form of mind. Till the time of death, the mind keeps breath in the body; and when the body dies the mind takes the breath along with it. Therefore, the exercise of breath control is only an aid for rendering the mind quiescent (*manonigraha*); it will not destroy the mind (*manonasa*).

Like the practice of breath control, meditation on the forms of God, repetition of *mantras*, food restrictions, etc., are but aids for rendering the mind quiescent.

Through meditation on the forms of God and through repetition of *mantras*, the mind becomes one-pointed. The mind will always be wandering. Just as when a chain is given to an elephant to hold in its trunk it will go along grasping the chain and nothing else, so also when the mind is occupied with a name or form it will grasp that alone. When the mind expands in the form of countless thoughts, each thought becomes weak; but as thoughts get resolved the mind becomes one-pointed and strong; for such a mind Self-enquiry will

become easy. Of all the restrictive rules, that relating to the taking of *sattvic* food in moderate quantities is the best; by observing this rule, the *sattvic* quality of mind will increase, and that will be helpful to Self-enquiry.

13. *The residual impressions (thoughts) of objects appear unending like the waves of an ocean. When will all of them get destroyed?*

As the meditation on the Self rises higher and higher, the thoughts will get destroyed.

14. *Is it possible for the residual impressions of objects that come from beginningless time, as it were, to be resolved, and for one to remain as the pure Self?*

Without yielding to the doubt 'Is it possible, or not?', one should persistently hold on to the meditation on the Self. Even if one be a great sinner, one should not worry and weep 'O! I am a sinner, how can I be saved?' One should completely renounce the thought 'I am a sinner' and concentrate keenly on meditation on the Self; then, one would surely succeed. There are not two minds — one good and the other evil; the mind is only one. It is the residual impressions that are of two kinds — auspicious and inauspicious. When the mind is under the influence of auspicious impressions it is called good, and when it is under the influence of inauspicious impressions it is regarded as evil.

The mind should not be allowed to wander towards worldly objects and what concerns other people. However bad other people may be, one should bear no hatred for them. Both desire and hatred should be eschewed. All that one gives to others one gives to one's self. If this truth is understood who will not give to others? When one's self arises all arises; when one's self becomes quiescent all becomes quiescent. To the

extent we behave with humility, to that extent there will result good. If the mind is rendered quiescent, one may live anywhere.

15. *How long should enquiry be practised?*

As long as there are impressions of objects in the mind, so long the enquiry ‘Who am I?’ is required. As thoughts arise they should be destroyed then and there in the very place of their origin through enquiry. If one resorts to contemplation of the Self unintermittently, until the Self is gained, that alone would do. As long as there are enemies within the fortress, they will continue to sally forth; if they are destroyed as they emerge, the fortress will fall into our hands.

16. *What is the nature of the Self?*

What exists in truth is the Self alone. The world, the individual soul and God are appearances in it. Like silver in mother-of-pearl, these three appear at the same time and disappear at the same time.

The Self is that where there is absolutely no ‘I-thought’. That is called ‘Silence’. The Self itself is the world; the Self itself is ‘I’; the Self itself is God; all is Siva, the Self.

17. *Is not everything the work of God?*

Without desire, resolve, or effort, the sun rises; and in its mere presence, the sunstone emits fire, the lotus blooms, water evaporates, people perform their various functions and then rest. Just as in the presence of the magnet the needle moves, it is by virtue of the mere presence of God that the souls governed by the three (cosmic) functions or the fivefold divine activity perform their actions and then rest, in accordance with their respective *karmas*. God has no resolve; no *karma* attaches itself to Him. That is like worldly actions not affecting the

sun, or like the merits and demerits of the other four elements not affecting all-pervading space.

18. *Of the devotees, who is the greatest?*

He who gives himself up to the Self that is God is the most excellent devotee. Giving one's self up to God means remaining constantly in the Self without giving room for the rise of any thoughts other than the thought of the Self.

Whatever burdens are thrown on God, He bears them. Since the supreme power of God makes all things move, why should we, without submitting ourselves to it, constantly worry ourselves with thoughts as to what should be done and how, and what should not be done and how not? We know that the train carries all loads, so after getting on it why should we carry our small luggage on our head to our discomfort, instead of putting it down in the train and feeling at ease?

19. *What is non-attachment?*

As thoughts arise, destroying them utterly without any residue in the very place of their origin is non-attachment. Just as the pearl-diver ties a stone to his waist, sinks to the bottom of the sea and there takes the pearls, so each one of us should be endowed with non-attachment, dive within oneself and obtain the Self-Pearl.

20. *Is it not possible for God and the Guru to effect the release of a soul?*

God and the Guru will only show the way to release; they will not by themselves take the soul to the state of release.

In truth, God and the Guru are not different. Just as the prey which has fallen into the jaws of a tiger has no escape, so those who have come within the ambit of the Guru's gracious look will be saved by the Guru and will not get lost;

yet, each one should, by his own effort pursue the path shown by God or Guru and gain release. One can know oneself only with one's own eye of knowledge, and not with somebody else's. Does he who is Rama require the help of a mirror to know that he is Rama?

21. *Is it necessary for one who longs for release to inquire into the nature of categories* (tattvas)*?*

Just as one who wants to throw away garbage has no need to analyse it and see what it is, so one who wants to know the Self has no need to count the number of categories or inquire into their characteristics; what he has to do is to reject altogether the categories that hide the Self. The world should be considered like a dream.

22. *Is there no difference between waking and dream?*

Waking is long and a dream short; other than this there is no difference. Just as waking happenings seem real while awake, so do those in a dream while dreaming. In dream the mind takes on another body. In both waking and dream states thoughts, names and forms occur simultaneously.

23. *Is it any use reading books for those who long for release?*

All the texts say that in order to gain release one should render the mind quiescent; therefore their conclusive teaching is that the mind should be rendered quiescent; once this has been understood there is no need for endless reading. In order to quieten the mind one has only to inquire within oneself what one's Self is; how could this search be done in books? One should know one's Self with one's own eye of wisdom. The Self is within the five sheaths; but books are outside them. Since the Self has to be inquired into by discarding the five sheaths, it is futile to search for it in books. There will come a time when one will have to forget all that one has learned.

24. *What is happiness?*

Happiness is the very nature of the Self; happiness and the Self are not different. There is no happiness in any object of the world. We imagine through our ignorance that we derive happiness from objects. When the mind goes out, it experiences misery. In truth, when its desires are fulfilled, it returns to its own place and enjoys the happiness that is the Self. Similarly, in the states of sleep, *samadhi* and fainting, and when the object desired is obtained or the object disliked is removed, the mind becomes inward-turned, and enjoys pure Self-happiness. Thus the mind moves without rest alternately going out of the Self and returning to it. Under the tree the shade is pleasant; out in the open the heat is scorching. A person who has been going about in the sun feels cool when he reaches the shade. Someone who keeps on going from the shade into the sun and then back into the shade is a fool. A wise man stays permanently in the shade. Similarly, the mind of the one who knows the truth does not leave *Brahman*. The mind of the ignorant, on the contrary, revolves in the world, feeling miserable, and for a little time returns to *Brahman* to experience happiness. In fact, what is called the world is only thought. When the world disappears, i.e., when there is no thought, the mind experiences happiness; and when the world appears, it goes through misery.

25. *What is wisdom-insight* (jnana drishti)?

Remaining quiet is what is called wisdom-insight. To remain quiet is to resolve the mind in the Self. Telepathy, knowing past, present and future happenings and clairvoyance do not constitute wisdom-insight.

26. *What is the relation between desirelessness and wisdom?*

Desirelessness is wisdom. The two are not different; they are the same. Desirelessness is refraining from turning the

mind towards any object. Wisdom means the appearance of no object. In other words, not seeking what is other than the Self is detachment or desirelessness; not leaving the Self is wisdom.

27. *What is the difference between enquiry and meditation*?

Enquiry consists in retaining the mind in the Self. Meditation consists in thinking that one's self is *Brahman*, Existence-Consciousness-Bliss.

28. *What is release*?

Inquiring into the nature of one's self that is in bondage, and realising one's true nature is release.

3

Spiritual Instruction

Sri Natanananda, one of the earliest devotees, noted down the conversation which took place one day between Bhagavan and his devotees. These were then arranged and expanded and shown to Bhagavan who appreciated them. They were then published under the name of Upadesa Manjari, *or* Spiritual Instruction.

Invocation

I seek refuge at the sacred feet of the blessed Ramana, who performs the entire work of creation, preservation and destruction, while remaining wholly unattached, and who makes us aware of what is real and thus protects us, that I may set down his words fittingly.

Importance of the Work

Worshipping with the instruments (of thought, word and body) the sacred lotus feet of Bhagavan Sri Ramana Maharshi, the very embodiment of the beginningless infinite supreme Brahman, *the* Satchitananda *(existence, consciousness, bliss), I have gathered this bouquet of the flowers of his instructions (*upadesa manjari*) for the benefit of those who are foremost among the seekers of liberation and who are adored by learned persons, in order that they might adorn themselves with it and attain salvation.*

This book is an epitome of the immortal words of that great soul, Sri Ramana Maharshi, whose teachings entirely dispelled the doubts and wrong notions of this humble person even as the sun dispels darkness.

The subject of this book is that eternal Brahman, *which shines as the pinnacle and* heart *of all the Vedas and Agamas.*

That incomparable Self-realization (atma siddhi) *which is praised by all the Upanishads and which is the supreme good to be sought by all noble aspirants* (brahmavids) *is the theme of this work.*

CHAPTER I

INSTRUCTION

(*Upadesa*)

1. *What are the marks of a real teacher* (Sadguru)?

Steady abidance in the Self, looking at all with an equal eye, unshakeable courage at all times, in all places and circumstances, etc.

2. *What are the marks of an earnest disciple* (sadsishya)?

An intense longing for the removal of sorrow and attainment of joy and an intense aversion for all kinds of mundane pleasure.

3. *What are the characteristics of instruction* (upadesa)?

The word '*upadesa*' means, 'near the place or seat' (*upa* - near, *desa* - place or seat). The Guru who is the embodiment of that which is indicated by the terms *sat*, *chit*, and *ananda* (existence, consciousness and bliss), prevents the disciple who, on account of his acceptance of the forms of the objects of the senses, has swerved from his true state and is consequently distressed and buffeted by joys and sorrows, from continuing so and establishes him in his own real nature without differentiation.

Upadesa also means showing a distant object quite near. It is brought home to the disciple that *Brahman* which he believes to be distant and different from himself is near and not different from himself.

4. *If it be true that the Guru is one's own Self* (Atman), *what is the principle underlying the doctrine which says that, however learned a disciple may be or whatever occult*

powers he may possess, he cannot attain Self-realization (atmasiddhi) *without the grace of the Guru*?

Although in absolute truth the state of the Guru is that of oneself it is very hard for the Self which has become the individual soul (*jiva*) through ignorance to realize its true state or nature without the grace of the Guru.

All mental concepts are controlled by the mere presence of the real Guru. If he were to say to one who arrogantly claims that he has seen the farther shore of the ocean of learning or one who claims arrogantly that he can perform deeds which are well-nigh impossible, "Yes, you learnt all that is to be learnt, but have you learnt (to know) yourself? And you who are capable of performing deeds which are almost impossible, have you seen yourself?" Questioned thus, they will bow their heads (in shame) and remain silent. Thus it is evident that only by the grace of the Guru and by no other accomplishment is it possible to know oneself.

5. *What are the marks of the Guru's grace*?

It is beyond words or thoughts.

6. *If that is so, how is it that it is said that the disciple realizes his true state by the Guru's grace*?

It is like the elephant which wakes up on seeing a lion in its dream. Even as the elephant wakes up at the mere sight of the lion, so too is it certain that the disciple wakes up from the sleep of ignorance into the wakefulness of true knowledge through the Guru's benevolent look of grace.

7. *What is the significance of the saying that the nature of the real Guru is that of the Supreme Lord* (Sarveshwara)?

In the case of the individual soul, which desires to attain the state of true knowledge or the state of Godhood (*Ishwara*)

and with that object always practises devotion, the Lord who is the witness of that individual soul and identical with it, comes forth, when the individual's devotion has reached a mature stage, in human form with the help of *sat-chit-ananda*. These three natural features, and form and name which he also graciously assumes, and in the guise of blessing the disciple, absorbs him in Himself. According to this doctrine the Guru can truly be called the Lord.

8. *How then did some great persons attain knowledge without a Guru*?

To a few mature persons the Lord shines as the light of knowledge and imparts awareness of the truth.

9. *What is the end of devotion* (bhakti) *and the path of* Siddhanta *(i.e.*, Saiva Siddhanta)?

It is to learn the truth that all one's actions performed with unselfish devotion, with the aid of the three purified instruments (body, speech and mind), in the capacity of the servant of the Lord, become the Lord's actions, and to stand forth free from the sense of 'I' and 'mine'. This is also the truth of what the *Saiva Siddhantins* call *parabhakti* (supreme devotion) or living in the service of God *(irai-pani-nittral)*.

10. *What is the end of the path of knowledge* (jnana) *or* Vedanta?

It is to know the truth that the 'I' is not different from the Lord (*Ishwara*) and to be free from the feeling of being the doer *(kartritva, ahamkara)*.

11. *How can it be said that the end of both these paths is the same*?

Whatever the means, the destruction of the sense 'I' and 'mine' is the goal, and as these are interdependent, the

destruction of either of them causes the destruction of the other; therefore in order to achieve that state of silence which is beyond thought and word, either the path of knowledge which removes the sense of 'I' or the path of devotion which removes the sense of 'mine', will suffice. So there is no doubt that the end of the paths of devotion and knowledge is one and the same.

Note: So long as the 'I' exists it is necessary to accept the Lord also. If any one wishes to regain easily the supreme state of identity (sayujya) *now lost to him, it is only proper that he should accept this conclusion.*

12. *What is the mark of the ego*?

The individual soul of the form of 'I' is the ego. The Self which is of the nature of intelligence (*chit*) has no sense of 'I'. Nor does the insentient body possess a sense of 'I'. The mysterious appearance of a delusive ego between the intelligent and the insentient, being the root cause of all these troubles, upon its destruction by whatever means, that which really exists will be seen as it is. This is called liberation (*moksha*).

CHAPTER II

PRACTICE
(*Abhyasa*)

1. *What is the method of practice*?

As the Self of a person who tries to attain Self-realization is not different from him and as there is nothing other than or superior to him to be attained by him, Self-realization being only the realization of one's own nature, the seeker of liberation realizes, without doubts or misconceptions, his real nature by distinguishing the eternal from the transient, and never swerves from his natural state. This is known as the practice of knowledge. This is the enquiry leading to Self-realization.

2. *Can this path of enquiry be followed by all aspirants*?

This is suitable only for ripe souls. The rest should follow different methods according to the state of their minds.

3. *What are the other methods*?

They are (1) *stuti*, (2) *japa*, (3) *dhyana*, (4) yoga, (5) *jnana*, etc.

(1) *Stuti* is singing the praises of the Lord with a great feeling of devotion.

(2) *Japa* is uttering the names of the gods or sacred mantras like *Om* either mentally or verbally. (While following the methods of *stuti* and *japa* the mind will sometimes be concentrated (*lit*., closed) and sometimes diffused (*lit*. open). The vagaries of the mind will not be evident to those who follow these methods).

(3) *Dhyana* denotes the repetition of the names, etc., mentally (*japa*) with feelings of devotion. In this method the state of the mind will be understood easily. For the mind does not become concentrated and diffused simultaneously. When one is in *dhyana* it does not contact the objects of the senses, and when it is in contact with the objects it is not in *dhyana*. Therefore those who are in this state can observe the vagaries of the mind then and there and by stopping the mind from thinking other thoughts, fix it in *dhyana*. Perfection in *dhyana* is the state of abiding in the Self (*lit.*, abiding in the form of 'That' — *tadakaranilai*) .

As meditation functions in an exceedingly subtle manner at the source of the mind it is not difficult to perceive its rise and subsidence.

(4) Yoga: The source of the breath is the same as that of the mind; therefore the subsidence of either leads effortlessly to that of the other. The practice of stilling the mind through breath control (*pranayama*) is called yoga.

Fixing their minds on psychic centres such as the *sahasrara* (*lit.*, the thousand-petalled lotus) *yogis* remain for any length of time without awareness of their bodies. As long as this state continues they appear to be immersed in some kind of joy. But when the mind which has become tranquil emerges (becomes active again) it resumes its worldly thoughts. It is therefore necessary to train it with the help of practices like *dhyana*, whenever it becomes externalised. It will then attain a state in which there is neither subsidence nor emergence.

(5) *Jnana* is the annihilation of the mind in which it is made to assume the form of the Self through the constant practice of *dhyana* or enquiry (*vichara*). The extinction of the mind is the state in which there is a cessation of all efforts. Those who are established in this state never swerve from

their true state. The terms 'silence' (*mauna*) and inaction refer to this state alone.

Note: All practices are followed only with the object of concentrating the mind. As all the mental activities like remembering, forgetting, desiring, hating, attracting, discarding, etc., are modifications of the mind, they cannot be one's true state. Simple, changeless being is one's true nature. Therefore to know the truth of one's being and to be it, is known as release from bondage and the destruction of the knot (granthi nasam). *Until this state of tranquillity of mind is firmly attained, the practice of unswerving abidance in the Self and keeping the mind unsoiled by various thoughts is essential for an aspirant.*

Although the practices for achieving strength of mind are numerous, all of them achieve the same end. For it can be seen that whoever concentrates his mind on any object, will, on the cessation of all mental concepts, ultimately remain merely as that object. This is called successful meditation (dhyana siddhi). *Those who follow the path of enquiry realize that the mind which remains at the end of the enquiry is* Brahman. *Those who practise meditation realize that the mind which remains at the end of the meditation is the object of their meditation. As the result is the same in either case it is the duty of aspirants to practise continuously either of these methods till the goal is reached.*

4. *Is the state of 'being still' a state involving effort or effortlessness*?

It is not an effortless state of indolence. All mundane activities which are ordinarily called effort are performed with the aid of a portion of the mind and with frequent breaks. But the act of communion with the Self (*atma vyavahara*) or

remaining still inwardly is intense activity which is performed with the entire mind and without break.

Maya (delusion or ignorance) which cannot be destroyed by any other act is completely destroyed by this intense activity which is called 'silence' (*mauna*).

5. *What is the nature of* maya?

Maya is that which makes us regard as nonexistent the Self, the Reality, which is always and everywhere present, all-pervasive and Self-luminous, and as existent the individual soul (*jiva*), the world (*jagat*), and God (*para*) which have been conclusively proved to be nonexistent at all times and places.

6. *As the Self shines fully of its own accord why is it not generally recognised like the other objects of the world by all persons*?

Wherever particular objects are known it is the Self which has known itself in the form of those objects. For what is known as knowledge or awareness is only the potency of the Self (*atma shakti*). The Self is the only sentient object. There is nothing apart from the Self. If there are such objects they are all insentient and therefore cannot either know themselves or mutually know one another. It is because the Self does not know its true nature in this manner that it seems to be immersed and struggling in the ocean of birth (and death) in the form of the individual soul.

7. *Although the Lord is all-pervasive it appears, from passages like 'adoring him through His grace', that He can be known only through His grace. How then can the individual soul by its own efforts attain Self-realization in the absence of the Lord's grace*?

As the Lord denotes the Self and as grace means the Lord's presence or revelation, there is no time when the Lord remains

unknown. If the light of the sun is invisible to the owl it is only the fault of that bird and not of the sun. Similarly, can the unawareness of the Self — which is always of the nature of awareness — by the ignorant, be other than their own fault? How can it be the fault of the Self? It is because grace is of the very nature of the Lord that He is well known as 'the blessed grace'. Therefore the Lord, whose nature itself is grace, does not have to bestow His grace. Nor is there any particular time for bestowing His grace.

8. *What part of the body is the abode of the Self*?

The Heart on the right side of the chest is generally indicated. This is because we usually point to the right side of the chest when we refer to ourselves. Some say that the *sahasrara* (the thousand-petalled lotus) is the abode of the Self. But if that were true the head should not fall forward when we go to sleep or faint.

9. *What is the nature of the* Heart?

The sacred texts describing it say:

Between the two breasts, below the chest and above the abdomen, there are six organs of different colours[1]. One of them resembling the bud of a water lily and situated two digits to the right is the Heart. It is inverted and within it is a tiny orifice which is the seat of dense darkness (ignorance) full of desires. All the psychic nerves (*nadis*) depend upon it. It is the abode of the vital forces, the mind and the light (of consciousness).[2]

But, although it is described thus, the meaning of the word Heart (*hridayam*) is the Self (*Atman*). As it is denoted by the

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[1] These are not the same as the *chakras*.

[2] See *Reality in Forty Verses*: *Supplement*, 18-19.

terms existence, consciousness, bliss, eternal and plenum (*sat, chit, anandam, nityam, purnam*) it has no differences such as exterior and interior or up and down. That tranquil state in which all thoughts come to an end is called the state of the Self. When it is realized as it is, there is no scope for discussions about its location inside the body or outside.

10. *Why do thoughts of many objects arise in the mind even when there is no contact with external objects*?

All such thoughts are due to latent tendencies (*purva samskaras*). They appear only to the individual consciousness (*jiva*) which has forgotten its real nature and become externalised. Whenever particular things are perceived, the enquiry 'Who is it that sees them?' should be made; they will then disappear at once.

11. *How do the triple factors (i.e., knower, known and knowledge), which are absent in deep sleep,* samadhi, *etc., manifest themselves in the Self (in the states of waking and dreaming)*?

From the Self there arise in succession:

(i) *Chidabhasa* (reflected consciousness) which is a kind of luminosity.

(ii) *Jiva* (the individual consciousness) or the seer or the first concept.

(iii) Phenomena, that is the world.

12. *Since the Self is free from the notions of knowledge and ignorance how can it be said to pervade the entire body in the shape of sentience or to impart sentience to the senses*?

Wise men say that there is a connection between the source of the various psychic nerves and the Self, that this is the knot

of the Heart, that the connection between the sentient and the insentient will exist until this is cut asunder with the aid of true knowledge, that just as the subtle and invisible force of electricity travels through wires and does many wonderful things, so the force of the Self also travels through the psychic nerves and, pervading the entire body, imparts sentience to the senses, and that if this knot is cut, the Self will remain as it always is, without any attributes.

13. *How can there be a connection between the Self which is pure knowledge and the triple factors which are relative knowledge*?

This is, in a way, like the working of a cinema (see next page).

Just as the pictures appear on the screen as long as the film throws the shadows through the lens, so the phenomenal world will continue to appear to the individual in the waking and dream states as long as there are latent mental impressions. Just as the lens magnifies the tiny specks on the film to a huge size and as a number of pictures are shown in a second, so the mind enlarges the sprout-like tendencies into treelike thoughts and shows in a second innumerable worlds. Again, just as there is only the light of the lamp visible when there is no film, so the Self alone shines without the triple factors when the mental concepts in the form of tendencies are absent in the states of deep sleep, swoon and *samadhi*. Just as the lamp illumines the lens, etc., while remaining unaffected, the Self illumines the ego (*Chidabhasa*), etc., while remaining unaffected.

14. *What is* dhyana *(meditation)*?

It is abiding as one's Self without swerving in any way from one's real nature and without feeling that one is meditating. As one is not in the least conscious of the different

Cinema Show	Self
1) The lamp inside (the apparatus).	The Self.
2) The lens in front of the lamp.	The pure *(sattvic)* mind close to the Self.
3) The film which is a long series of separate photos.	The stream of latent tendencies consisting of subtle thoughts.
4) The lens, the light passing through it and the lamp, which together form the focused light.	The mind, the illumina-tion of it and the Self, which together form the seer or the *jiva*.
5) The light passing through the lens and falling on the screen.	The light of the Self emerging from the mind through the senses, and falling on the world.
6) The various kinds of pictures appearing in the light of the screen.	The various forms and names appearing as the objects perceived in the light of the world.
7) The mechanism which sets the film in motion.	The divine law manifesting the latent tendencies of the mind.

states (waking, dreaming, etc.) in this condition, the sleep (noticeable) here is also regarded as *dhyana*.

15. *What is the* differ*ence* between dhyana and samadhi?

Dhyana is achieved through deliberate mental effort; in *samadhi* there is no such effort.

16. *What are the factors to be kept in view in* dhyana?

It is important for one who is established in his Self (*atma nishta*) to see that he does not swerve in the least from this absorption. By swerving from his true nature he may see before him bright effulgences, etc., or hear (unusual) sounds or regard as real the visions of gods appearing within or outside himself. He should not be deceived by these and forget himself.

Note: If the moments that are wasted in thinking of the objects which are not the Self, are spent on enquiry into the Self, Self-realization will be attained in a very short time.

Until the mind becomes established in itself some kind of bhavana *(contemplation of a personified god or goddess with deep emotion and religious feeling) is essential. Otherwise the mind will be frequently assailed by wayward thoughts or sleep.*

Without spending all the time in practising bhavanas *like 'I am Siva' or 'I am* Brahman*', which are regarded as* nirgunopasana *(contemplation of the attributeless* Brahman*), the method of enquiry into oneself should be practised as soon as the mental strength which is the result of such* upasana, *(contemplation) is attained.*

The excellence of the practice (sadhana) *lies in not giving room for even a single mental concept* (vritti).

17. *What are the rules of conduct which an aspirant* (sadhaka) *should follow*?

Moderation in food, moderation in sleep and moderation in speech.

18. *How long should one practise*?

Until the mind attains effortlessly its natural state of freedom from concepts, that is till the sense of 'I' and 'mine' exists no longer.

19. *What is the meaning of dwelling in solitude* (ekantavasa)?

As the Self is all-pervasive it has no particular place for solitude. The state of being free from mental concepts is called 'dwelling in solitude'.

20. *What is the sign of wisdom* (viveka)?

Its beauty lies in remaining free from delusion after realising the truth once. There is fear only for one who sees even a slight difference in the Supreme *Brahman*. So long as there is the idea that the body is the Self one cannot be a realizer of truth whoever he might be.

21. *If everything happens according to* karma *(*prarabdha, *the result of one's acts in the past) how is one to overcome the obstacles to meditation* (dhyana)?

Prarabdha concerns only the out-turned, not the in-turned mind. One who seeks his real Self will not be afraid of any obstacle.

22. *Is asceticism* (sannyasa) *one of the essential requisites for a person to become established in the Self* (atmanishta)?

The effort that is made to get rid of attachment to one's body is really towards abiding in the Self. Maturity of thought and enquiry alone removes attachment to the body, not the stations of life (*ashramas*), such as student (*brahmachari*), etc. For the attachment is in the mind while the stations pertain

to the body. How can bodily stations remove the attachment in the mind? As maturity of thought and enquiry pertain to the mind, these alone can, by enquiry on the part of the same mind, remove the attachments which have crept into it through thoughtlessness. But, as the discipline of asceticism (*sannyasashrama*) is the means for attaining dispassion (*vairagya*), and as dispassion is the means for enquiry, joining an order of ascetics may be regarded, in a way, as a means of enquiry through dispassion. Instead of wasting one's life by entering the order of ascetics before one is fit for it, it is better to live the householder's life. In order to fix the mind in the Self which is its true nature it is necessary to separate it from the family of fancies (*sankalpas*) and doubts (*vikalpas*), that is to renounce the family (*samsara*) in the mind. This is real asceticism.

23. *It is an established rule that so long as there is the least idea of 'I-am-the-doer,' Self-knowledge cannot be attained, but is it possible for an aspirant who is a householder to discharge his duties properly without this sense*?

As there is no rule that action should depend upon a sense of being the doer it is unnecessary to doubt whether any action will take place without a doer or an act of doing. Although the officer of a government treasury may appear, in the eyes of others, to be doing his duty attentively and responsibly all day long, he will be discharging his duties without attachment, thinking 'I have no real connection with all this money' and without a sense of involvement in his mind. In the same manner a wise householder may also discharge without attachment the various household duties which fall to his lot according to his past *karma*, like a tool in the hands of another. Action and knowledge are not obstacles to each other.

24. *Of what use to his family is a wise householder who is unmindful of his bodily comforts and of what use is his family to him*?

Although he is entirely unmindful of his bodily comforts, if, owing to his past *karma*, his family has to subsist by his efforts, he may be regarded as doing service to others. If it is asked whether the wise man derives any benefit from the discharge of domestic duties, it may be answered that, as he has already attained the state of complete satisfaction which is the sum total of all benefits and the highest good of all, he does not stand to gain anything more by discharging family duties.

25. *How can cessation of activity* (nivritti) *and peace of mind be attained in the midst of household duties which are of the nature of constant activity*?

As the activities of the wise man exist only in the eyes of others and not in his own, although he may be accomplishing immense tasks, he really does nothing. Therefore his activities do not stand in the way of inaction and peace of mind. For he knows the truth that all activities take place in his mere presence and that he does nothing. Hence he will remain as the silent witness of all the activities taking place.

26. *Just as the sage's past karma is the cause of his present activities will not the impressions* (vasanas) *caused by his present activities adhere to him in future*?

Only one who is free from all the latent tendencies (*vasanas*) is a sage. That being so how can the tendencies of karma affect him who is entirely unattached to activity?

27. *What is the meaning of* brahmacharya?

Only enquiry into *Brahman* should be called *brahmacharya*.

28. *Will the practice of* brahmacharya *which is followed in conformity with the (four) orders of life* (ashramas) *be a means of knowledge*?

As the various means of knowledge, such as control of senses, etc., are included in *brahmacharya*, the virtuous practices duly followed by those who belong to the order of students (*brahmacharins*) are very helpful for their improvement.

29. *Can one enter the order of ascetics* (sannyasa) *directly from the order of students* (brahmacharya)?

Those who are competent need not formally enter the orders of *brahmacharya*, etc., in the order laid down. One who has realized his Self does not distinguish between the various orders of life. Therefore no order of life either helps or hinders him.

30. *Does an aspirant* (sadhaka) *lose anything by not observing the rules of caste and orders of life*?

As the attainment (*anusthana*, *lit.*, practice) of knowledge is the supreme end of all other practices, there is no rule that one who remains in any one order of life and constantly acquires knowledge is bound to follow the rules laid down for that order of life. If he follows the rules of caste and orders of life he does so for the good of the world. He does not derive any benefit by observing the rules. Nor does he lose anything by not observing them.

CHAPTER III

EXPERIENCE
(*Anubhava*)

1. *What is the light of consciousness*?

It is the Self-luminous existence-consciousness which reveals to the seer the world of names and forms both inside and outside. The existence of this existence-consciousness can be inferred by the objects illuminated by it. It does not become the object of consciousness.

2. *What is knowledge* (vijnana)?

It is that tranquil state of existence-consciousness which is experienced by the aspirant and which is like the waveless ocean or the motionless ether.

3. *What is bliss*?

It is the experience of joy (or peace) in the state of *vijnana,* free of all activities and similar to deep sleep. This is also called the state of *kevala nirvikalpa* (remaining without concepts).

4. *What is the state beyond bliss*?

It is the state of unceasing peace of mind which is found in the state of absolute quiescence, *jagrat-sushupti* (*lit.,* sleep with awareness) which resembles inactive deep sleep. In this state, in spite of the activity of the body and the senses, there is no external awareness, like a child immersed in sleep[1] (who

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[1] The acts of sleeping children like eating and drinking are acts only in the eyes of others and not in their own. They do not therefore really do those acts in spite of their appearing to do them.

is not conscious of the food given to him by his mother). A *yogi* who is in this state is inactive even while engaged in activity. This is also called *sahaja nirvikalpa* samadhi (natural state of absorption in oneself without concepts).

5. *What is the authority for saying that the entire moving and unmoving worlds depend upon oneself*?

The Self means the embodied being. It is only after the energy, which was latent in the state of deep sleep, emerges with the idea of 'I' that all objects are experienced. The Self is present in all perceptions as the perceiver. There are no objects to be seen when the 'I' is absent. For all these reasons it may undoubtedly be said that everything comes out of the Self and goes back to the Self.

6. *As the bodies and the selves animating them are everywhere actually observed to be innumerable how can it be said that the Self is only one*?

If the idea 'I am the body' is accepted[2], the selves are multiple. The state in which this idea vanishes is the Self, since in that state there are no other objects. It is for this reason that the Self is regarded as one only.

7. *What is the authority for saying that* Brahman *can be apprehended by the mind and at the same time that it cannot be apprehended by the mind*?

It cannot be apprehended by the impure mind but can be apprehended by the pure mind.

8. *What is pure mind and what is impure mind*?

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[2] The idea that one is one's body is what is called *hrdaya-granthi* (knot of the Heart). Of the various knots, this one, which binds together what is conscious with what is insentient, is what causes bondage.

When the indefinable power of *Brahman* separates itself from *Brahman* and, in union with the reflection of consciousness (*Chidabhasa*) assumes various forms, it is called the impure mind. When it becomes free from the reflection of consciousness (*abhasa*), through discrimination, it is called the pure mind. Its state of union with the *Brahman* is its apprehension of *Brahman*. The energy which is accompanied by the reflection of consciousness is called the impure mind and its state of separation from *Brahman* is its non-apprehension of *Brahman*.

9. *Is it possible to overcome, even while the body exists, the karma* (prarabdha) *which is said to last till the end of the body*?

Yes. If the agent (doer) upon whom the karma depends, namely the ego, which has come into existence between the body and the Self, merges in its source and loses its form, will the karma which depends upon it alone survive? Therefore when there is no 'I' there is no karma.

10. *As the Self is existence and consciousness, what is the reason for describing it as different from the existent and the nonexistent, the sentient and the insentient*?

Although the Self is real, as it comprises everything, it does not give room for questions involving duality about its reality or unreality. Therefore it is said to be different from the real and the unreal. Similarly, even though it is consciousness, since there is nothing for it to know or to make itself known to, it is said to be different from the sentient and the insentient.

CHAPTER IV

ATTAINMENT
(*Arudha*)

1. *What is the state of attainment of knowledge*?

It is firm and effortless abidance in the Self in which the mind which has become one with the Self does not subsequently emerge again at any time. That is, just as everyone usually and naturally has the idea, 'I am not a goat nor a cow nor any other animal but a human', when he thinks of his body, so also when he has the idea 'I am not the principles (*tattwas*) beginning with the body and ending with sound (*nada*), but the Self which is existence, consciousness and bliss, the innate self-consciousness (*atma prajna*)', he is said to have attained firm knowledge.

2. *To which of the seven stages of knowledge* (jnana bhoomikas)[1] *does the sage* (jnani) *belong*?

He belongs to the fourth stage.

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[1] The seven *jnana bhoomikas* are:

(i). *subheccha* (the desire for enlightenment).

(ii). *vicharana* (enquiry).

(iii). *tanumanasa* (tenuous mind).

(iv). *satwapatti* (self-realization).

(v). *asamsakti* (non-attachment).

(vi). *padarthabhavana* (non-perception of objects).

(vii). *turyaga* (transcendence).

Those who have attained the last four *bhoomikas* are called *brahmavid, brahmavidvara, brahmavidvariya* and *brahmavidvaristha* respectively.

3. *If that is so why have three more stages superior to it been distinguished*?

The marks of the stages four to seven are based upon the experiences of the realized person (*jivanmukta*). They are not states of knowledge and release. So far as knowledge and release are concerned no distinction whatever is made in these four stages.

4. *As liberation is common to all, why is the varistha (*lit.*, the most excellent) alone praised excessively*?

So far as the *varistha's* common experience of bliss is concerned, he is extolled only because of the special merit acquired by him in his previous births, which is the cause of it.

5. *As there is no one who does not desire to experience constant bliss what is the reason why all sages* (jnanis) *do not attain the state of* varistha?

It is not to be attained by mere desire or effort. *Karma* (*prarabdha*) is its cause. As the ego dies along with its cause even in the fourth stage (*bhoomika*), what agent is there beyond that stage to desire anything or to make efforts? So long as they make efforts they will not be sages (*jnanis*). Do the sacred texts (*srutis*) which specially mention the *varistha* say that the other three are unenlightened persons?

6. *As some sacred texts say that the supreme state is that in which the sense organs and the mind are completely destroyed, how can that state be compatible with the experience of the body and the senses*?

If that were so there would not be any difference between that state and the state of deep sleep. Further, how can it be said to be the natural state when it exists at one time and not at another? This happens, as stated before, to some persons according to their karma *(prarabdha)* for some time or till

death. It cannot properly be regarded as the final state. If it could it would mean that all great souls and the Lord, who were the authors of the Vedantic works *(jnana granthas)* and the Vedas, were unenlightened persons. If the supreme state is that in which neither the senses nor the mind exist and not the state in which they exist, how can it be the perfect state (*paripurnam*)? As *karma* alone is responsible for the activity or inactivity of the sages, great souls have declared the state of *sahaja nirvikalpa* (the natural state without concepts) alone to be the ultimate state.

7. *What is the difference between ordinary sleep and waking sleep* (jagrat sushupti)?

In ordinary sleep there are not only no thoughts but also no awareness. In waking sleep there is awareness alone. That is why it is called awake while sleeping, that is, the sleep in which there is awareness.

8. *Why is the Self described both as the fourth state* (turiya) *and beyond the fourth state* (turiyatita)?

Turiya means that which is the fourth. The experiencers (*jivas*) of the three states of waking, dreaming and deep sleep, known as *visva*, *taijasa* and *prajna*, who wander successively in these three states, are not the Self. It is with the object of making this clear, namely that the Self is that which is different from them and which is the witness of these states, that it is called the fourth *(turiya)*. When this is known, the three experiencers disappear and the idea that the Self is a witness, that it is the fourth, also disappears. That is why the Self is described as beyond the fourth (*turiyatita*).

9. *What is the benefit derived by the sage from the sacred books* (srutis)?

The sage who is the embodiment of the truths mentioned in the scriptures has no use for them.

10. *Is there any connection between the attainment of supernatural powers* (siddhis) *and liberation* (mukti)?

Enlightened enquiry alone leads to liberation. Supernatural powers are all illusory appearances created by the power of *maya* (*mayashakti*). Self-realization which is permanent is the only true accomplishment (*siddhi*). Accomplishments which appear and disappear, being the effect of *maya*, cannot be real. They are accomplished with the object of enjoying fame, pleasures, etc. They come unsought to some persons through their *karma*. Know that union with *Brahman* is the real aim of all accomplishments. This is also the state of liberation (*aikya mukti*) known as union (*sayujya*).

11. *If this is the nature of liberation* (moksha) *why do some scriptures connect it with the body and say that the individual soul can attain liberation only when it does not leave the body*?

It is only if bondage is real that liberation and the nature of its experiences have to be considered. So far as the Self (*Purusha*) is concerned it has really no bondage in any of the four states. As bondage is merely a verbal assumption according to the emphatic proclamation of the *Vedanta* system, how can the question of liberation, which depends upon the question of bondage, arise when there is no bondage? Without knowing this truth, to enquire into the nature of bondage and liberation, is like enquiring into the nonexistent height, colour, etc., of a barren woman's son or the horns of a hare.

12. *If that is so, do not the descriptions of bondage and release found in the scriptures become irrelevant and untrue*?

No, they do not. On the contrary, the delusion of bondage fabricated by ignorance from time immemorial can be

removed only by knowledge, and for this purpose the term 'liberation' (*mukti*) has been usually accepted. That is all. The fact that the characteristics of liberation are described in different ways proves that they are imaginary.

13. *If that is so, are not all efforts such as study (*lit., *hearing) reflection, etc., useless*?

No, they are not. The firm conviction that there is neither bondage nor liberation is the supreme purpose of all efforts. As this purpose of seeing boldly, through direct experience, that bondage and liberation do not exist, cannot be achieved except with the aid of the aforesaid practices, these efforts are useful.

14. *Is there any authority for saying that there is neither bondage nor liberation*?

This is decided on the strength of experience and not merely on the strength of the scriptures.

15. *If it is experienced how is it experienced*?

'Bondage' and 'liberation' are mere linguistic terms. They have no reality of their own. Therefore they cannot function of their own accord. It is necessary to accept the existence of some basic thing of which they are the modifications. If one enquires, 'for whom is there bondage and liberation?' it will be seen, 'they are for me'. If one enquires, 'Who am I?', one will see that there is no such thing as the 'I'. It will then be as clear as an *amalaka* fruit in one's hand that what remains is one's real being. As this truth will be naturally and clearly experienced by those who leave aside mere verbal discussions and enquire into themselves inwardly, there is no doubt that all realized persons uniformly see neither bondage nor liberation so far as the true Self is concerned.

16. *If truly there is neither bondage nor liberation what is the reason for the actual experience of joys and sorrows*?

They appear to be real only when one turns aside from one's real nature. They do not really exist.

17. *Is it possible for everyone to know directly without doubt what exactly is one's true nature*?

Undoubtedly it is possible.

18. *How*?

It is the experience of everyone that even in the states of deep sleep, fainting, etc., when the entire universe, moving and stationary, beginning with earth and ending with the unmanifested *(prakriti)*, disappear, he does not disappear. Therefore the state of pure being which is common to all and which is always experienced directly by everybody is one's true nature. The conclusion is that all experiences in the enlightened as well as the ignorant state, which may be described by newer and newer words, are opposed to one's real nature.

POEMS

4
Five Hymns to Arunachala

The Five Hymns to Arunachala *are the earliest poems of the Maharshi except for a few short verses. They were written about 1914, that is when he was about thirty-five years old (he was born in December 1879). He was still living in Virupaksha Cave on the hill. Some of his followers who were* sadhus *used to go into the town of Tiruvannamalai daily to beg for food. One day they asked the Maharshi to compose a song for them to sing as they went. At first he refused, saying that there were already plenty of songs by the ancient* Saivite *saints. They continued to press him, however, and he began to compose a song with a refrain at the end of each and every stanza.*

One day he started to go round the hill, with Palaniswami walking behind him. After he had gone some way Aiyaswami seems to have called Palaniswami back and given him a pencil and paper, saying, "For some days now Swami has been composing stanzas everyday. He may do so today as well, so you had better take this paper and pencil with you." That day Sri Bhagavan practically completed the Marital Garland of Letters, *the first of the five hymns. It tells in glowing symbolism of the love and union between the human soul and God, and is among the most profound and moving poems in any*

language. Although he who wrote it was established in the bliss of indissoluble Union, it was written for the sake of devotees and expresses the attitude of devotion and aspiration.

The second, third and fourth poems (hymns) were written at about the same time, and they also adopt the same attitude. Whereas the later poems of the Maharshi are more doctrinal, these hymns are more emotional, expressing more the attitude of devotion and aspiration.

The Eleven Verses *and the* Eight Stanzas *are among the very few poems of the Maharshi that were written quite spontaneously without any request, as he himself said when speaking of them:*

> *The only poems that came to me spontaneously and compelled me, as it were, to write them without any one urging me to do so are the* Eleven Verses to Sri Arunachala *and the* Eight Stanzas to Sri Arunachala*. The opening words of the* Eleven Stanzas *came to me one morning and even though I tried to suppress them saying, "What have I to do with these words?" they would not be suppressed till I composed a song bringing them in; and all the words flowed easily, without any effort. The remaining stanzas except two were also composed in the same way.*
>
> *Shortly afterwards Narayana Reddi came. He was at that time living in Vellore as an agent of Singer & Co., and he used to come from time to time. Aiyasami and Palani told him about the poems and he said, 'Give them to me at once and I will go and get them printed.' He had already published some books. When he insisted on taking the poems I told him he could do so and could publish the first eleven as one form of poem and the rest, which were in a different metre, as another. To make up the required quota*

I at once composed two more stanzas and he took all the nineteen stanzas with him to get them published.[1]

The fifth hymn, Arunachala Pancharatna, *is of a different nature to the first four. The great Sanskrit poet and devotee Ganapati Sastri, who was a follower of Bhagavan, begged him to write a poem in Sanskrit. Bhagavan replied, laughing, that he scarcely knew any Sanskrit and no Sanskrit metres. Sastri, however, explained a metre to him and repeated his request. Bhagavan then composed a poem of five stanzas, two on one day and three on the following day. They were all in perfect, flawless Sanskrit. It is a cryptic account of the different paths to Realization and therefore a commentary has been included with the translation. This hymn is chanted daily at the time of* Veda Parayana.

It is to be understood that in all these hymns the word 'Arunachala' means God and nothing less. It also, however, means the physical hill of Arunachala in South India where God is peculiarly manifested for the Maharshi and his disciples. From ancient times various spiritual centres in India have represented various paths and modes of doctrine, and Arunachala among them the doctrine of advaita *and the path of Self-enquiry. Although the ultimate doctrine and the supreme and most direct path, this, throughout the ages, has not been the most popular, because for most people it seemed too austere and difficult. The Maharshi attained Realization through a spontaneous act of Self-enquiry, with no human guru. There is no place to do more than touch upon the mystery of this here. It is sufficient to note that the Maharshi agreed with all other masters that a guru is necessary, adding however that the guru need not necessarily take human form. When he left home as a youth who was already a Sage, Arunachala*

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[1] *Ramana Maharshi and the Path of Self-knowledge*, by Arthur Osborne.

drew him like a powerful magnet. He went straight there and stayed there for the rest of his life. It was Arunachala that he regarded as his guru, and these hymns are written to Arunachala, to the Guru, to God manifested, to the Absolute.

Through the potent grace of Bhagavan Ramana Maharshi, the path of Self-enquiry was brought within the competence of men and women of this age, was indeed fashioned into a new path that can be followed anonymously in the conditions of the modern world, with no forms or ritual, nothing to distinguish a person outwardly from the world wherein he moves. This creation of a new path to suit the needs of the age has made Arunachala the spiritual centre of the world. More than ever, now that he has shed his physical body and is one with Arunachala, the grace and guidance that emanates from him to those who turn to him and seek his aid is centred at Arunachala. It is the holy place and many are drawn there, both those who were disciples of the Maharshi in his lifetime and those who have come later.

It remains to be said that the literary Tamil in which the hymns were written can be used in an extremely cryptic manner and the first hymn especially abounds in passages which can be understood in more than one manner. In such cases the alternative readings are given.

Before coming to the Five Hymns *we print first a verse that Sri Bhagavan wrote on Sri Ganesa, as being an auspicious opening to the poems. After this comes a verse that Sri Muruganar wrote on the significance of Arunachala and another one by Bhagavan on the significance of the beacon that is lit on its summit every year at the festival of* Deepam. *Only after this follow the* Five Hymns.

To Sri Ganesa

One day in l912, a potter came to the Virupaksha Cave with a small image of Sri Ganesa that he had made and presented it to Sri Bhagavan. Easwara Swami suggested that both he and Sri Bhagavan should write a verse each to celebrate the occasion. This is what Sri Bhagavan wrote:

He who begot you as a child you made
Into a beggar; as a child yourself
You then lived everywhere just to support
Your own huge belly; I too am a child.
Oh Child God in that niche! Encountering one
Born after you, is your heart made of stone?
I pray you look at me!

Significance of Arunachala

The sudden rise of the blazing column of Annamalai[1] in front of Brahma and Vishnu and their utter distress at not being able to know the same is symbolic of the *sphurana* of the Heart centre as the real Self of the intellect and the ego.

Significance of the Beacon

Getting rid of the ‘I am the body’ idea and merging the mind into the Heart to realize the Self as non-dual being and the light of all is the real significance of *darshan* of the beacon of light on Annamalai, the centre of the universe.

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[1] Annamalai is another name for Arunachala.

Sri Arunachala Mahatmya[1]

(*The Glory of Sri Arunachala*)

Nandi[2] said:

'That is the holy place! Of all Arunachala is the most sacred! It is the heart of the world! Know it to be the secret and sacred Heart-centre of Siva! In that place he always abides as the glorious Aruna Hill!

'That day on which the ancient and wonderful linga of Arunachala took shape is the asterism of *Ardra* in the month of *Mrigasira*. And the day on which Vishnu and the other devas worshipped the Lord who emerged from the effulgence is the day of *Maha Sivaratri*.'

Siva said:

'Though in fact fiery, my lacklustre appearance as a hill on this spot is an act of grace and loving solicitude for the maintenance of the world. Here I always abide as the Great One *(Siddha)*. Remember that in the interior of my Heart is transcendental glory with all the enjoyments of the world also.

'Because they bind the beings of the worlds, know that relentless karmas become the bondage for *jivas*. The effulgent Arunachala is this (mountain), the mere sight of which causes them to become nonexistent.

'What cannot be acquired without endless pains — the true import of *Vedanta* — is easily attained by all who can either directly sight this hill or even mentally think of it from afar.

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[1] Extracts from The *Skanda Purana* translated into Tamil by Sri Bhagavan.

[2] Nandi is the foremost devotee of Siva, always remaining in front of him.

‘I ordain that residence within a radius of three *yojanas*[3] of this hill shall by itself suffice to burn off all defects and effect union with the Supreme even in the absence of initiation.’

Devi said:

‘This is always the abode of pious devotees. Those who do evil to others here will, after suffering ills, be destroyed. Wicked persons will be completely bereft of their powers to do evil here in the twinkling of an eye. Do not fall into the burning fire of the anger of Lord Arunachala who has assumed the form of a hill of fire.’

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[3] A *yojana* is ten miles.

The Marital Garland of Letters

(Akshara Mana Malai)

This joyful Marital Garland of Letters *which resembles a beam of the rays of the rising sun was sung by the noble Sage Ramana, the ocean of compassion, with the object of removing the delusion of the devotees who sought his grace. Those who look upon it as their sole refuge will realize within themselves that they are Arunachala and will reign in the world of Siva.*[1]

Invocation

Gracious Ganapati[2] with Thy (loving) hand bless me, that I may make this a marital garland of letters worthy of Sri Arunachala, the bridegroom!

Refrain

Arunachala Siva! Arunachala Siva!
Arunachala Siva! Arunachala!
Arunachala Siva! Arunachala Siva!
Arunachala Siva! Arunachala!

1. (a) Thou dost root out the ego of those who meditate on Thee in the Heart, Oh Arunachala!

(b) Arunachala! Thou dost root out the ego of those who dwell on their (spiritual) identity with Thee, Oh Arunachala!

2. May Thou and I be one and inseparable like *Alagu* and *Sundara*,[3] Oh Arunachala!

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[1] This was composed by Sri Muruganar.

[2] Another name for Sri Ganesa.

[3] The Tamil word *alagu* and Sanskrit word *sundara* have one and the same meaning: 'beauty.' Alagu and Sundara were also the names of Sri Ramana's mother and father.

3. Entering (my) home and luring me (to Thine) why didst Thou keep me prisoner in Thy Heart's cavern, Oh Arunachala?

4. Was it for Thy pleasure or for my sake Thou didst win me? If now Thou turn me away, the world will blame Thee, Oh Arunachala!

5. Escape this blame! Why didst Thou then recall Thyself to me? How can I leave Thee now, Oh Arunachala?

6. (a) Kinder far art Thou than one's own mother. Is this then Thy all-kindness, Oh Arunachala?

(b) Kinder indeed art Thou than one's mother, such is Thy Love, Oh Arunachala!

7. (a) Sit firmly in my mind lest it elude Thee, Oh Arunachala!

(b) Change not Thy nature and flee, but hold fast in my mind, Oh Arunachala!

(c) Be watchful in my mind, lest it change even Thee (into me) and rush away, Oh Arunachala!

8. (a) Display Thy beauty, for the fickle mind to see Thee forever and to rest (in peace), Oh Arunachala!

(b) The strumpet mind will cease to walk the streets if only she find Thee. Disclose Thy beauty then and hold her bound, Oh Arunachala!

(c) The mind by her unsteadiness prevents my seeking Thee and finding peace; (hold her and) grant me the vision of Thy beauty, Oh Arunachala!

9. After abducting me if now Thou dost not embrace me, where is Thy chivalry, Oh Arunachala?

10. Does it become Thee thus to sleep when I am outraged by others, Oh Arunachala?

11. Even when the thieves of the five senses break in upon me, art Thou not still in my Heart, Oh Arunachala?

12. One art Thou without a second; who then could dare elude Thee and come in? This is only Thy jugglery, Oh Arunachala!

13. Significance of Om, unrivalled — unsurpassed! Who can comprehend Thee, Oh Arunachala?

14. As (Universal Mother) it is Thy duty to dispense Thy grace and save me, Oh Arunachala!

15. (a) Who can ever find Thee? The Eye of the eye art Thou, and without eyes Thou seest, Oh Arunachala!

(b) Being the sight of the eye, even without eyes find me out Thyself. Who (but Thyself) can find out Thee, Oh Arunachala?

16. As a lodestone attracts iron, magnetising it and holding it fast, so do Thou to me, Oh Arunachala!

17. (Unmoving) Hill, melting into a Sea of Grace, have mercy (on me) I pray, Oh Arunachala!

18. Fiery Gem, shining in all directions, do Thou burn up my dross, Oh Arunachala!

19. Shine as my Guru, making me free from faults and worthy of Thy Grace, Oh Arunachala!

20. Save me from the cruel snares of fascinating women and honour me with union with Thyself, Oh Arunachala!

21. Though I beg, Thou art callous and dost not condescend. I pray Thee! Say to me ‘Fear not’, Oh Arunachala!

22. Unasked Thou givest; this is Thy imperishable fame. Do not belie Thy name, Oh Arunachala!

23. Sweet fruit within my hands, let me be mad with ecstasy, drunk with the bliss of Thy essence, Oh Arunachala!

24. Blazoned as the devourer of Thy votaries, how can I survive who have embraced Thee, Oh Arunachala?

25. (a) Thou, unruffled by anger! What crime has marked me off (for Thy wrath), Oh Arunachala?

(b)Thou, unruffled by anger! What (austerities left) incomplete (in previous births) have won me Thy special favour, Oh Arunachala?

26. Glorious Mountain of Love, celebrated by Gautama,[4] rule me with Thy gracious glance, Oh Arunachala!

27. Dazzling Sun that swallowest up all the universe in Thy rays, open the lotus of my Heart, I pray, Oh Arunachala!

28. (a) Let me, Thy prey, Surrender unto Thee and be consumed, and so have peace, Oh Arunachala!

(b) I came to feed on Thee, but Thou hast fed on me; now there is peace, Oh Arunachala!

29. O Moon of Grace, with Thy (cool) rays as hands, open (within me) the ambrosial orifice and let my Heart rejoice, Oh Arunachala!

30. Tear off these robes, expose me naked, then robe me with Thy love, Oh Arunachala!

31. There (in the Heart) rest quiet! Let the sea of joy surge, speech and feeling cease, Oh Arunachala!

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[4] The Gautama here referred to is not the Buddha but a Hindu Sage of that name who dwelt at Arunachala.

32. Do not continue to deceive and prove me; disclose instead Thy transcendent Self, Oh Arunachala!

33. Vouchsafe the knowledge of eternal life that I may learn the glorious primal wisdom, and shun the delusion of this world, Oh Arunachala!

34. Unless Thou embrace me, I shall melt away in tears of anguish, Oh Arunachala!

35. If spurned by Thee, alas! What rests for me but the torment of my *prarabdha*?[5] What hope is left for me, Oh Arunachala?

36. In silence Thou saidst, 'Stay silent' and Thyself stoodst silent, Oh Arunachala![6]

37. Happiness lies in peaceful repose enjoyed when resting in the Self. Beyond speech indeed is Thy prowess resting in the Self. Beyond speech indeed is This my state, Oh Arunachala!

38. (a) Thou didst display Thy prowess once, and the perils ended, return to Thy repose, Oh Arunachala!

(b) Sun! Thou didst sally forth and (the siege of) illusion was ended. Then didst Thou shine motionless (alone), Oh Arunachala!

39. (a) (A dog can scent out its master); am I then worse than a dog? Steadfastly will I seek Thee and regain Thee, Oh Arunachala!

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[5] Prarabdha is the part of destiny due to past actions (karmas) which bear fruit in the present birth.

[6] Silence is the highest and most perfect form of instruction which the guru can give, for by its nature it is the closest to the essential object of such instruction, which is the realization by the disciple of the incommunicable and inexpressible Absolute.

(b) Worse than a dog (for want of scent) how can I track Thee (to Thy home), Oh Arunachala?

40. Grant me wisdom, I beseech Thee, so that I may not pine for love of Thee in ignorance, Oh Arunachala!

41. (a) Not finding the flower open, Thou didst stay, no better than a (frustrated) bee, Oh Arunachala!

(b) (In sunlight the lotus blossoms), how then couldst Thou, the Sun of suns hover before me like a flower bee, saying 'Thou art not yet in blossom', Oh Arunachala?

42. (a) 'Thou hast realized the Self even without knowing that it was the truth. It is the truth itself!' Speak (thus if it be so), Oh Arunachala!

(b) Thou art the subject of most diverse views, yet art Thou not this only, Oh Arunachala!

(c) Not known to the *tattvas*, though Thou art their being! What does this mean, Oh Arunachala!

43. (a) That each one is Reality Itself, Thou wilt of Thy nature show, Oh Arunachala!

(b) Reveal Thyself! Thou only art Reality, Oh Arunachala!

(c) 'Reality is nothing but the Self'; is this not all Thy message, Oh Arunachala?

44. 'Look within, ever seeking the Self with the inner eye, then will (it) be found.' Thus didst Thou direct me, beloved Arunachala!

45. (a) Seeking Thee within but weakly, I came back (unrewarded). Aid me, Oh Arunachala!

(b) Weak though my effort was, by Thy grace, I gained the Self, Oh Arunachala!

(c) Seeking Thee in the Infinite Self I regained my own (Self), Oh Arunachala!

46. What value has this birth without knowledge born of Realization? It is not even worth speaking about, Oh Arunachala?

47. (a) Let me dive into the true Self, wherein merge only the pure in mind and speech, Oh Arunachala!

(b) I, by Thy Grace, am sunk in Thy Self, wherein merge only those divested of their minds and thus made pure, Oh Arunachala!

48. When I took shelter under Thee as my One God, Thou didst destroy me altogether, Oh Arunachala!

49. Treasure of benign and holy Grace, found without seeking, steady my wandering mind, Oh Arunachala!

50. On seeking Thy Real Self with courage, my raft capsized and the waters came over me. Have mercy on me, Oh Arunachala!

51. (a) Unless Thou extend Thy hand of grace in mercy and embrace me, I am lost, Oh Arunachala!

(b) Enfold me body to body, limb to limb, or I am lost, Oh Arunachala!

52. O Undefiled, abide Thou in my Heart so that there may be everlasting joy, Oh Arunachala!

53. (a) Mock me not, who seek Thy protection! Adorn me with Thy Grace and then regard me, Oh Arunachala!

(b) Smile with Grace and not with scorn on me, who come to Thee (for refuge), Oh Arunachala!

54. (a) When I approached, Thou didst not bend; Thou stoodst unmoved, at one with me, Oh Arunachala!

(b) Does it not shame Thee to stand there like a post, (leaving me) to find Thee by myself, Oh Arunachala?

55. Rain Thy Mercy on me ere Thy knowledge burn me to ashes, Oh Arunachala!

56. Unite with me to destroy (our separate identities as) Thou and me, and bless me with the state of ever vibrant joy, Oh Arunachala!

57. (a) When shall I (become) like the ether and reach Thee, subtle of being, that the tempest of thoughts may end, Oh Arunachala?

(b) When will waves of thought cease to rise? When shall I reach Thee, subtler than the subtle ether, Oh Arunachala?

58. (a) I am a simpleton devoid of learning. Do Thou dispel my illusion, Oh Arunachala!

(b) Destroy Thou my wrong knowledge, I beseech Thee, for I lack the knowledge which the scriptures lead to, Oh Arunachala!

59. When I melted away and entered Thee, my Refuge, (I found) Thee standing naked (like the famous *Digambara*),[7] Oh Arunachala!

60. In my unloving self Thou didst create a passion for Thee; therefore forsake me not, Oh Arunachala!

61. (a) Fruit shrivelled and spoilt is worthless; take and enjoy it ripe, Oh Arunachala!

(b) I am not (like) a fruit which is overripe and spoilt; draw me, then, into the inmost recess (of the Heart) and fix me in eternity, Oh Arunachala!

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[7] *Digambara*, from *dik* — the directions of space, and *ambara* — cloth, i.e,. one who is clothed in the directions of space, in other words, who goes naked.

62. (a) Hast Thou not bartered cunningly Thyself for me (for my individuality is lost)? Oh, Thou art death to me, Oh Arunachala!

(b) Hast Thou not bartered cunningly Thyself for me (giving all and taking nothing)? Art Thou not blind, Oh Arunachala?

63. Regard me! Take thought of me! Touch me![8] Mature me! Make me one with Thee, Oh Arunachala!

64. Grant me Thy Grace ere the poison of delusion grips me and, rising to my head, kills me, Oh Arunachala!

65. Thyself regard me and dispel illusion! Unless Thou do so who can intercede with Grace itself made manifest, Oh Arunachala?

66. With madness for Thee hast Thou freed me of madness (for the world); grant me now the cure of all madness, Oh Arunachala!

67. Fearless I seek Thee, Fearlessness Itself! How canst Thou fear to take me, Oh Arunachala?

68. Where is (my) ignorance of (Thy) wisdom, if I am blessed with union to Thee, Oh Arunachala?

69. (a) My mind has blossomed, (then) scent it with Thy fragrance and perfect it, Oh Arunachala!

(b) Espouse me, I beseech Thee, and let this mind now wedded to the world be wedded to perfection, Oh Arunachala!

70. Mere thought of Thee has drawn me to Thee, and who can gauge Thy Glory (in Itself), Oh Arunachala?

71. Thou has possessed me, unexorcisable Spirit, and made me mad (for Thee), that I may cease to be a ghost (wandering the world), Oh Arunachala!

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[8] 'Regard me! Take thought of me! Touch me!' refer respectively to the three modes of initiation, by look, by thought and by touch.

72. Be Thou my stay and my support lest I droop helpless like a tender creeper, Oh Arunachala!

73. Thou didst benumb (my faculties) with stupefying powder,[9] then rob me of my understanding and reveal the Knowledge of Thy Self, Oh Arunachala!

74. Show me the warfare of Thy Grace, in the open field where there is no coming and going, Oh Arunachala!

75. Unattached to the physical frame composed of the (five) elements, let me forever repose happy in the sight of Thy Splendour, Oh Arunachala!

76. Thou hast administered the medicine of confusion to me, so must I be confounded! Shine Thou as grace, the cure of all confusion, Oh Arunachala!

77. Shine Thou selfless, sapping the pride of those who boast of their freewill, Oh Arunachala!

78. I am a fool who prays only when overwhelmed (by misery), yet disappoint me not, Oh Arunachala!

79. Guard me lest I flounder storm-tossed like a ship without helmsman, Oh Arunachala!

80. Thou hast cut the knot which hid the vision of Thy head and foot (the limitless Self). Mother-like, shouldst Thou not complete Thy task, Oh Arunachala?[10]

81. Be not (like) a mirror held up to a noseless man, but raise me (from my lowliness) and embrace me, Oh Arunachala!

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[9] This verse alludes to the wandering ascetics who spirit away children for disciples, stupefying them with a pinch of powder such as sacred ashes.

[10] The cutting of the knot which binds man to illusion implies the attainment of *nirvikalpa samadhi*; completion of the task refers to the state of *sahaja samadhi*.

82. Let us embrace upon the bed of tender flowers, which is the mind, within the room of the body (or the Ultimate Truth), Oh Arunachala!

83. How is it that Thou hast become famous from Thy constant union with the poor and humble, Oh Arunachala?

84. Thou hast removed the blindness of ignorance with the unguent of Thy Grace, and made me truly Thine, Oh Arunachala!

85. Thou didst shave clean my head (and I was lost to the world),[11] then Thou didst (show Thyself) dancing in transcendent space, Oh Arunachala!

86. (a) Though Thou hast loosed me from the mists of error and made me mad for Thee, why hast Thou not yet freed me from illusion, Oh Arunachala?

(b) Though Thou hast detached me from the world and made me cleave to Thee, Thy passion for me has not cooled, Oh Arunachala!

87. Is it true Silence to rest like a stone inert and unexpansive, Oh Arunachala?

88. Who was it that threw mud to me for food[12] and robbed me of my livelihood, Oh Arunachala?

89. Unknown to all, stupefying me, who was it that ravished my soul, Oh Arunachala?

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[11] The parenthesis is not a mere addition to explain the implication of shaving the head, for by an alternative reading, involving the change of a single letter, these words become explicit in the text.

[12] Literally 'Threw mud in my mouth', an expression meaning 'caused my ruin'. The deeper meaning of the verse is: 'Who was it that individualised me and robbed me of my Perfect Being?'

90. I spoke thus to Thee, because Thou art my Lord; be not offended but come and give me happiness, Oh Arunachala!

91. Let us enjoy one another in the house of open space where is neither night nor day, Oh Arunachala![13]

92. Thou didst take aim (at me) with darts of love and then devoured me alive, Oh Arunachala!

93. Thou art the primal being, whereas I count not in this nor the other world. What didst Thou gain then by my worthless self, Oh Arunachala?

94. Didst Thou not call me in? I have come in. Now measure out for me, (my maintenance is now Thy burden). Hard is Thy lot, Oh Arunachala!

95. The moment Thou didst welcome me, didst enter into me and grant me Thy divine life, I lost my individuality, Oh Arunachala!

96. Bless me that I may die without losing hold of Thee, or miserable is (my fate), Oh Arunachala!

97. From my home Thou didst entice me, then stealing into my Heart didst draw me gently into Thine, (such is) Thy Grace, Oh Arunachala!

98. I have betrayed Thy (secret) workings. Be not offended. Show me Thy Grace now openly and save me, Oh Arunachala!

99. Grant me the essence of the Vedas, which shine in the *Vedanta*, one without a second, Oh Arunachala!

100. (a) Even my slanders, treat as praise and guard me for ever as Thine own, I pray, Oh Arunachala!

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[13] The allusion is to the ‘cavity’ of the Heart which is beyond time and space.

(b) Let even slander be as praise to me, and guard me for ever as Thine own, I pray, Oh Arunachala!

(c) Place (Thy hand) upon my head! Make me partaker of Thy Grace! Do not abandon me, I pray, Oh Arunachala!

101. As snow in water, let me melt as love in Thee, Who art love itself, Oh Arunachala!

102. I had but thought of Thee as Aruna, and lo! I was caught in the trap of Thy grace! Can the net of Thy grace ever fail, Oh Arunachala?

103. Watching like a spider to trap me in the web (of Thy grace), Thou didst entwine me and when imprisoned feed upon me, Oh Arunachala!

104. Let me be the votary of the votaries of those who hear Thy name with love, Oh Arunachala!

105. Shine Thou for ever as the loving saviour of helpless suppliants like myself, Oh Arunachala!

106. Familiar to Thine ears are the sweet songs of votaries who melt to the very bones with love for Thee, yet let my poor strains also be acceptable, Oh Arunachala!

107. Hill of Patience, bear with my foolish words, (regarding them) as hymns of joy or as Thou please, Oh Arunachala!

108. Oh Arunachala! My Loving Lord! Throw Thy garland (about my shoulders) wearing Thyself this one (strung) by me, Oh Arunachala!

Blessed be Arunachala! Blessed be His devotees!
Blessed be this Marital Garland of Letters!

The Necklet of Nine Gems

1. In the court (of Chidambaram), Siva, though motionless by nature, dances (in rapture) before His Shakti who stands still. Know that in Arunachala He stands in His solemnity and She withdraws there into His Unmoving Self.

2. ‘A’, ‘ru’, and ‘na’ signify *Sat*, *Chit*, and *Ananda* (Being, Consciousness, and Bliss), or again the Supreme Self, the individual self, and their union as the one absolute, expressed in the *mahavakya*[1] ‘That thou art’; ‘*achala*’ signifies perfection. So worship Arunachala of shining golden lustre; for mere remembrance of Him ensures deliverance.

3. Those who take refuge at the lotus feet of the supreme Lord of Mercy presiding over Arunachala — their minds freed of attachment to riches, lands and relatives, and to caste and the like,[2] and ever made purer by seeking Thy benign grace — these rid themselves (of the misery) of darkness, and in the steady light of Thy ever protecting grace, which shines like the golden rays of the rising sun, they abide happy, sunk in the ocean of bliss.

4. Annamalai![3] Think not to let me pine away wistfully as one unmindful of Thee (for Thou art ever in my mind),[4] nor is it (right) that I should be reduced to dust mistaking the

[1] A *vakya* is a *Vedic* utterance. *Mahavakya* means ‘great utterance’. Of these, four are especially distinguished; *tattvamasi* (‘That thou art’) is one such.

[2] ‘The like’ are the four stages of life (*ashramas*).

[3] Arunachala.

[4] The parenthesis incorporates an alternative sense.

vile body for the Self. Turn Thy gracious and refreshing glance upon me, eye of my eyes! Do not fail me, Lord who art consciousness itself, neither male nor female. Abide Thou in my Heart!

5. Lord! Who art consciousness itself, reigning over the sublime Sonagiri[5] forgive all the grievous wrongs of this poor self, and by Thy gracious glance, benign as a rain cloud, save me from being lost once more in the dreary waste, or else I cannot ford the grim (stream of universal) manifestation. (Thou art the universal Mother;)[6] What can match a mother's care for her child?

6. 'Killer of Kama'[7] Thou art always called by Thy votaries. Lord Arunachala! A doubt arises if the title fits Thee. If it is fitting, how then can Kama, the mighty, the invisible, continue — brave and valiant though he be — to creep into a mind sheltering under Thy feet, who art his killer?

7. Oh Arunachala! As soon as Thou didst claim me, my body and soul were Thine. What else can I desire? Thou art both merit and demerit, Oh my life! I cannot think of these apart from Thee. Do as Thou wilt then, my beloved, but grant me only ever increasing love for Thy feet!

8. To rescue me — born of virtuous Sundara and Sundari[8] in the holy place Tiruchuzhi, seat of Bhumi-nateshwara — from the pain of miserable mundane life, He

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[5] Arunachala.

[6] Cf. *The Marital Garland of Letters*, v. 14.

[7] Kama is Cupid; his temptation of Siva while engaged in *tapas*, ended in his conflagration by a wrathful glance from Siva's third eye. Out of pity for his disconsolate wife, Rati, Siva subsequently granted him continued existence in a subtle body.

[8] Sundari means 'beauty' and refers to Alagu, Bhagavan's mother.

raised me to His state, that His heart might so rejoice, the immanence of Siva so shine forth, and the Self flourish. Such is Arunachala, famous throughout the universe!

9. Bearing and tending me in the world in the shape of my father and mother, Thou didst abide in my mind, and before I fell into the deep sea called *jaganmaya*[9] and was drowned, Thou didst draw me to thee, Arunachala, consciousness itself. Such is the wonder of Thy grace!

[9] *Jaganmaya* is universal illusion.

Eleven Verses to Sri Arunachala

1. Now that by Thy grace Thou hast claimed me, what will become of me unless Thou manifest Thyself to me, and I, yearning wistfully for Thee, and harassed by the darkness of the world, and lost? Oh love, in the shape of Arunachala, can the lotus blossom without sight of the sun? Thou art the sun of suns; Thou causest grace to well up in abundance and pour forth as a stream!

2. Arunachala, Thou form of grace itself! Once having claimed me, loveless though I be, how canst Thou let me now be lost, and fail to fill me so with love that I must pine for Thee unceasingly and melt within like wax over the fire? Oh nectar springing up in the Heart of devotees! Haven of my refuge! Let Thy pleasure be mine, for that way lies my joy, Lord of my life!

3. Drawing me with the cords of Thy grace, although I had not even dimly thought of Thee, Thou didst decide to kill me outright. How then has one so weak as I offended Thee that Thou dost leave the task unfinished?[1] Why dost Thou torture me thus, keeping me suspended between life and death? Oh Arunachala! Fulfil Thy wish, and long survive me all alone, Oh Lord!

4. What did it profit Thee to choose out, me, from all those struggling in *samsara*,[2] to rescue my helpless self from being lost and hold me at Thy feet? Lord of the ocean of

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[1] *Alternatively:* What austerities left incomplete in previous births have won me Thy special favour. (Cf. *The Marital Garland of Letters,* v. 25b). What more is left for me to gain or to fulfil?

[2] *Samsara* is the universal flux of manifestation.

grace! Even to think of Thee puts me to shame. (Long) mayst Thou live! I bow my head to Thee and bless Thee!

5. Lord! Thou didst capture me by stealth and all these days hast held me at Thy feet! Lord! Thou hast made me (to stand) with hanging head, (dumb) like an image when asked what is Thy nature.[3] Lord! Deign to ease me in my weariness, struggling like a deer that is trapped. Lord Arunachala! What can be Thy will? (Yet) who am I to comprehend Thee?

6. Lord of my life! I am ever at Thy feet, like a frog (which clings) to the stem of the lotus; make me instead a honeybee which (from the blossom of the Heart) sucks the sweet honey of Pure Consciousness; then shall I have deliverance. If I am lost while clinging to Thy lotus feet, it will be for Thee a standing column of ignominy, Oh blazing pillar of light, called Arunachala! Oh (wide) expanse of grace, more subtle than ether!

7. Oh pure one! If the five elements, the living beings and every manifest thing is nothing but Thy all-embracing Light, how then can I (alone) be separate from Thee? Since Thou shinest in the Heart, a single expanse without duality, how then can I come forth distinct therefrom? Show Thyself planting Thy lotus feet upon the head of the ego as it emerges!

8. Thou hast withheld from me all knowledge of gradual attainment while living in the world, and set me at peace; such a care indeed is blissful and not painful to anyone, for death in life is in truth glorious.[4] Grant me, wasteful and mad (for Thee), the sovereign remedy of clinging to Thy Feet!

[3] *Alternatively:* Thou has made me (rest tense) like a bent bow when asked what is Thy nature.

[4] *Alternatively:* Thou has destroyed my ability to earn my living in the world and made a wastrel of me; this condition is miserable and unhappy; to die is better than to live in such ignominy.

9. Oh Transcendent! I am the first of those who have not the supreme wisdom to clasp Thy feet in freedom from attachment. Ordain Thou that my burden be transferred to Thee and my freewill effaced, for what indeed can be a burden to the sustainer (of the universe)? Lord Supreme! I have had enough (of the fruits) of carrying (the burden of) this world upon my head, parted from Thee. Arunachala, Supreme Self! Think no more to keep me at a distance from Thy feet!

10. I have discovered a new thing! This hill, the lodestone of lives, arrests the movements of anyone who so much as thinks of it, draws him face to face with it, and fixes him motionless like itself, to feed upon his soul thus ripened. What (a wonder) is this! Oh souls! beware of It and live![5] Such a destroyer of lives is this magnificent Arunachala, which shines within the Heart!

11. How many are there who have been ruined like me for thinking this hill to be the supreme?[6] Oh men who, disgusted with this life of intense misery, seek a means of giving up the body, there is on earth a rare drug which, without actually killing him, will annihilate anyone who so much as thinks of it. Know that it is none other than this Arunachala!

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[5] *Alternatively:* Oh souls! Think upon it and be saved!

[6] *Alternatively:* How many are there who have lost (their ego) for having thought this hill to be the supreme?

Eight Stanzas to Sri Arunachala

'The hill which draws to itself those who are rich in jnanatapas[1] *is this Arunachala.'*

(From *Annamalai Venba*, by Guru Namasivaya, disciple of Guhai Namasivaya)

1. Hearken; It stands as an insentient[2] hill. Its action is mysterious, past human understanding. From the age of innocence it had shone within my mind that Arunachala was something of surpassing grandeur,[3] but even when I came to know through another that it was the same as Tiruvannamalai I did not realize its meaning. When it drew me up to it, stilling my mind, and I came close, I saw it (stand) unmoving.[4]

2. 'Who is the seer?' When I sought within, I watched the disappearance of the seer and what survived him. No thought of 'I saw' arose; how then could the thought 'I did not see' arise? Who has the power to convey this in word when even Thou (appearing as Dakshinamurti) couldst do so in ancient days by silence only? Only to convey by silence Thy (transcendent) state Thou standest as a hill, shining from heaven to earth.

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[1] i.e. those who are ever intent on gaining wisdom.

[2] The adjective also bears the meaning 'eradicating (objective) knowledge'.

[3] 'To view Chidambaram, to be born in Tiruvarur, to die in Varanasi, or merely to think of Arunachala is to be assured of liberation' — This couplet is very well-known, particularly in South India.

[4] *Alternatively:* I realized that It meant absolute stillness.

3. When I approach regarding Thee as having form, Thou standest as a hill on earth. If (with the mind the seeker) looks for Thy (essential) form as formless, he is like one who travels the earth to see the (ever-present) ether. To dwell without thought upon Thy (boundless) nature is to lose one's (separate) identity like a doll of sugar when it comes in contact with the ocean (of nectar; and) when I come to realize who I am, what else is this identity of mine (but Thee), Oh Thou who standest as the towering Aruna Hill?

4. To look for God while ignoring Thee who art being and consciousness is like going with a lamp to look for darkness. Only to make Thyself known as being and consciousness, Thou dwellest in different religions under different (names and) forms. If (yet) men do not (come to) know Thee, they are indeed the blind who do not know the sun. Oh Arunachala the great, Thou peerless gem, abide and shine Thou as my Self, one without a second!

5. As the string in (a necklet of) gems, it is Thou in Thy unity who penetratest all the diversity of beings and religions. If, like a gem when it is cut and polished, the (impure) mind is worked against the wheel of the (pure) mind to free it of its flaws, it will take on the light of Thy grace (and shine) like a ruby, whose fire is unaffected by any outward object. When a sensitive plate has been exposed to the sun, can it receive impressions afterwards? Oh benign and dazzling Aruna Hill! Is there anything apart from Thee?

6. Thou art Thyself the one being, ever aware as the Self-luminous Heart! In Thee there is a mysterious power *(Shakti)* which without Thee is nothing. From it proceeds the phantom of the mind emitting its latent subtle dark mists, which illumined by Thy light (of consciousness) reflected on them, appear within as thoughts whirling in the vortices of

prarabdha, later developing into the psychic worlds and projected outwardly as the material world transformed into concrete objects which are magnified by the outgoing senses and move about like pictures in a cinema show. Visible or invisible, oh hill of grace, without Thee they are nothing!

7. Until there is the 'I-thought', there will be no other thought. Until other thoughts arise, (asking) 'To whom?' (will call forth the reply) 'To me'. He who pursues this closely, questioning 'What is the origin of the I?' and diving inwards reaches the seat of the mind (within) the Heart, becomes (there) the sovereign Lord of the Universe.[5] Oh boundless ocean of grace and effulgence called Arunachala, dancing motionless within the court of the Heart! There is no (longer any) dream there of such dualities as in and out, right and wrong, birth and death, pleasure and pain, or light and darkness.

8. The waters rise up from the sea as clouds, then fall as rain and run back to the sea in streams; nothing can keep them from returning to their source. Likewise the soul rising up from Thee cannot be kept from joining Thee again, although it turns in many eddies on its way. A bird which rises from the earth and soars into the sky can find no place of rest in midair, but must return again to earth. So indeed must all retrace their path, and when the soul finds the way back to its source, it will sink and be merged in Thee, Oh Arunachala, Thou ocean of bliss!

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[5] Literally: The Sovereign Lord under the shade of a single umbrella.

Five Stanzas to Sri Arunachala

1. Ocean of nectar, full of grace, engulfing the universe in Thy splendour! Oh Arunachala, the Supreme itself! Be Thou the sun and open the lotus of my Heart in Bliss!

This is the opening stanza of the Pancharatna *which in the form of a* stotra *(praise of God) contains the gist of supreme knowledge born of realization. It is said to be like a* sutra, *very terse with much deeper significance than appears superficially.*

Arunachala — Aruna *(light) plus* achala *(mountain), means the* tejolinga *(symbol of light) of Siva. Its significance for the individual is that when one gets beyond body-consciousness, the inner Self shines pure and clear.*

Ordinary loss of body-consciousness, as in shock, results only in darkness, whereas the same brought about voluntarily for the purpose of Self-realization, ends in the illumination of the Self, by the sole grace of God.

Such illumination destroys the ego, producing complete self-surrender to the Lord. The Lord is eternal; the sense of eternity is bliss (nectar).

Just as the lotus bud, flourishing in marshy pools, blossoms at sunrise, so also the Heart, behind the soiled mind, shines forth by the grace of God who is the Self of all selves and who is externally visible as Arunachala. But this sun, after rising up, never sets again and the Heart of the realized soul is in blossom once and for all.

2. Oh Arunachala! In Thee the picture of the universe is formed, has its stay, and is dissolved; this is the sublime truth. Thou art the inner Self, who dancest in the Heart as 'I'. 'Heart' is Thy name, Oh Lord!

This sloka *refers to God first as creator, preserver, and destroyer, and then as realized by the enlightened.*

The liberated say that just as God is the stay of the universe, so also, the Heart is of the individual. The part must be of the nature of the whole; the whole (God) is infinity. Therefore, there is no distinction between the Heart and God.

God is consciousness, as also is the Heart. Self-contained and sublime, it manifests as the individual self concomitantly with an individualising force perceptible as the 'ego' or 'I'. If the ego is traced back, they say that there becomes perceptible a vibration from the Heart, signifying the real Self.

3. He who turns inward with untroubled mind to search where the consciousness of 'I' arises, realizes the Self, and rests in Thee, Oh Arunachala! like a river when it joins the ocean.

This sloka *deals with* jnana marga, *the path of knowledge, followed by enquirers and seekers after truth. It is one of the three or even four paths to realization of Self. These are* jnana, *yoga*, bhakti *and* karma.

The ocean, being the store of all waters, evaporates, clouds are formed, and rain falls, giving rise to rivers which as soon as formed become restless, as it were, course along as if to find their origin and repose only after being discharged into the ocean. Similarly, the individual emanating from the Heart is restless, and becomes eager to find his own source. The way is the trail of the 'ego' into the Heart.

4. Abandoning the outer world, with mind and breath controlled, to meditate on Thee within, the *yogi* sees Thy light, Oh Arunachala! And finds his delight in Thee.

This stanza deals with yoga marga, *described in Patanjali's* Yoga Sutras.

While a jnani *seeks within for the source of the ego and is liberated on tracing it to the Heart, a* yogi, *craving to see the glory of God, turns away from other pursuits and concentrates on Him (in the shape or name of Arunachala). The hill, though material in outward appearance, becomes full of life and perceptible in the transcendental vision of the* yogi, *as the universal glorious light, the same as the Self.*

5. He who dedicates his mind to Thee and, seeing Thee, always beholds the universe as Thy figure, he who at all times glorifies Thee and loves Thee as none other than the Self, he is the master without rival, being one with Thee, Oh Arunachala, and lost in Thy bliss!

The first part of this stanza deals with bhakti marga. *Glorifying God with intense love, one passes beyond* samsara *and is happy at being merged in Him. This is* bhakti. *The transcendental vision reveals Arunachala as one's own master, and such repeated experiences convince one of the immanence of God. Complete Surrender of self ensues and what remains over is only the all-pervading, and ever-present glorious Being-Consciousness. Transcendence sweeps away names and forms and the result is infinity, eternity.*

The second part of the stanza deals with karma marga. *Feeling God's immanence everywhere, one considers oneself not as the agent, but as a tool to serve God in the shape of one's surroundings.*

There are three aspects of God according to one's own realization. They are: Sat *(being),* Chit *(consciousness),* Ananda *(bliss).*

The Sat *aspect is emphasised by* jnanis *who are said to repose in the essence of Being after incessant search for the same and with their individuality lost in the Supreme.*

The Chit *aspect is for* yogis *who exert themselves to control their breath in order to steady the mind and are then said to see the glory (Consciousness of Being) of God as the one light radiating in all directions.*

The Ananda *aspect is for devotees who become intoxicated with the nectar of the love of God and lose themselves in blissful experience. Unwilling to leave this, they remain for ever merged in God.*

The four margas — karma, bhakti, *yoga and* jnana — *are not exclusive of one another. Each is, however, described separately in classical works only to convey an idea of the appropriate aspect of God to appeal readily to the aspirant according to his predisposition. This* stotra, *though short, is compact and can be so expanded as to be of interest also to scholars and philosophers.*

Arunagiri Ramana, for the benefit of this world, joyously bestowed, in sweet Tamil *venbas*, the "Arunachala Pancharatna," the quintessential wisdom of Vedanta, which was revealed initially by him in Sanskrit.[1]

May powerful Arunachala's name, which liberally bestows grace, live forever!
May the five hymns bearing his name live forever!
May the feet of exalted Ramana, from whose tongue the five hymns flowered forth, live forever!
May the virtuous devotees who abide firmly in those feet live forever![2]

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[1] Written by Gajananan (Daivarata) in Sanskrit and translated into Tamil by Bhagavan.

[2] Composed by Muruganar.

5

The Essence of Instruction

(Upadesa Saram)

There is a legend that a group of rishis *once lived in the Daruka forest together, practising rites by which they acquired supernatural powers. By the same means they hoped to attain final liberation. In this, however, they were mistaken, for action can only result in action, not in the cessation of action; rites can produce powers but not the peace of liberation which is beyond rites and powers and all forms of action. Siva determined to convince them of their error and therefore appeared before them as a wandering* sadhu. *Together with him came Vishnu in the form of a beautiful lady. All the rishis were smitten with love for this lady and thereby their equilibrium was disturbed and their rites and powers were adversely affected. Moreover their wives, who were also living with them in the forest, all fell in love with the strange* sadhu. *Incensed at this, they conjured up an elephant and a tiger by magic rites and sent them against him. Siva, however, slew them easily and took the elephant's skin for a robe and the tiger's for a wrap. The* rishis *then realized that they were up against one more powerful than themselves and they bowed down to him and asked him for instruction.*

He then explained to them that it is not by action but by renunciation of action that one attains liberation.

The poet Muruganar wanted to write a hundred verses on this theme but he could not readily proceed beyond seventy verses. It then occurred to him that Bhagavan was the proper person to write the verses relating to Siva's instructions. He therefore begged Bhagavan to compose them and Bhagavan accordingly composed thirty Tamil verses. He himself later rendered them into Sanskrit. These thirty verses were subsequently translated by Bhagavan into Telugu under the name of Anubhuti Saram *first, and* Upadesa Saram *afterwards. Bhagavan likewise rendered them into Malayalam. The Sanskrit version,* Upadesa Saram, *was chanted before him daily together with the Vedas and continues to be chanted before his shrine; that is to say, it is treated as a scripture. He refers to the various paths to liberation, grading them in order of efficiency and excellence, and showing that the best is Self-enquiry.*

1. Action yields fruit,
For so the Lord ordains it.
How can action be the Lord?
It is insentient.

2. The fruit of action passes.
But action leaves behind
Seed of further action
Leading to an endless ocean of action;
Not at all to *moksha*.

3. Disinterested action
Surrendered to the Lord
Purifies the mind and points
The way to *moksha*.

4. This is certain:
Worship, praise and meditation,
Being work of body, speech and mind,
Are steps for orderly ascent.

5. Ether, fire, air, water, earth,
Sun, moon, and living beings —
Worship of these,
Regarded all as forms of His,
Is perfect worship of the Lord.

6. Better than hymns of praise
Is repetition of the Name;
Better low-voiced than loud,
But best of all
Is meditation in the mind.

7. Better than spells of meditation
Is one continuous current,
Steady as a stream,
Or downward flow of oil.

8. Better than viewing Him as Other,
Indeed the noblest attitude of all,
Is to hold Him as the 'I' within,
The very 'I'.

9. Abidance in pure being
Transcending thought through love intense
Is the very essence
Of supreme devotion.

10. Absorption in the Heart of being,
    Whence we sprang,
    Is the path of action, of devotion,
    Of union and of knowledge.

11. Holding the breath controls the mind,
    Like a bird caught in a net.
    Breath-regulation helps
    Absorption in the Heart.

12. Mind and breath (as thought and action)
    Fork out like two branches.
    But both spring
    From a single root.

13. Absorption is of two sorts:
    Submergence and destruction.
    Mind submerged rises again;
    Dead, it revives no more.

14. Breath controlled and thought restrained,
    The mind turned one-way inward
    Fades and dies.

15. Mind extinct, the mighty seer
    Returns to his own natural being
    And has no action to perform.

16. It is true wisdom
    For the mind to turn away
    From outer objects and behold
    Its own effulgent form.

17. When unceasingly the mind
Scans its own form,
There is nothing of the kind.
For everyone
This path direct is open.

18. Thoughts alone make up the mind;
And of all thoughts the ‘I’ thought is the root.
What is called mind is but the notion ‘I’.

19. When one turns within and searches
Whence this ‘I' thought arises,
The shamed ‘I’ vanishes
And wisdom’s quest begins.

20. Where this ‘I’ notion fades,
Now there as I, as I, arises
The One, the very Self, The Infinite.

21. Of the term, ‘I’ the permanent import
Is ‘That’. For even in deep sleep
Where we have no sense of ‘I’
We do not cease to be.

22. Body, senses, mind, breath, sleep —
All insentient and unreal —
Cannot be ‘I’,
‘I’ who am the Real.

23. For knowing That which Is
There is no other knower.
Hence Being is Awareness
And we are all Awareness.

24. In the nature of their being, creature and creator
Are in substance one.
They differ only
In adjuncts and awareness.

25. Seeing oneself free of all attributes
Is to see the Lord,
For He shines ever as the pure Self.

26. To know the Self is but to be the Self,
For It is non-dual.
In such knowledge
One abides as That.

27. That is true knowledge which transcends
Both knowledge and ignorance,
For in pure knowledge
There is no object to be known.

28. Having known one's nature one abides
As being with no beginning and no end
In unbroken consciousness and bliss.

29. Abiding in this state of bliss
Beyond bondage and release,
Is steadfastness
In service of the Lord.

30. All ego gone,
Living as That alone
Is penance good for growth,
Sings Ramana, the Self.

(Translated by Prof. K. Swaminathan)

6

Reality in Forty Verses

(Ulladu Narpadu)

Once Bhagavan composed twenty Tamil stanzas containing his important teachings. They were not written in any particular order to form a poem. Sri Muruganar therefore suggested that Bhagavan should write twenty stanzas more to make it the conventional forty. Accordingly, Bhagavan composed twenty more stanzas. Out of these forty, Kavyakanta Ganapati Muni selected two as the invocatory stanzas. Then Bhagavan wrote two more to complete the forty. Some of the stanzas were translations from Sanskrit, but as devotees wanted all the forty verses to be original they were eliminated and new stanzas composed in their place. The verses were all arranged in a continuous order to form a poem. Later, a supplement consisting of a second forty verses was added. So indifferent to authorship was Bhagavan that he did not write all those supplementary verses himself. When he came upon a suitable one he used it — mostly translations from Sanskrit — and when not, he made one. The verses eliminated from the original forty verses were included in the supplement.[1]

[1] The supplement verses he composed are italicized. Those verses which he took from other texts are the Invocation, verses 1-7, 9, the final sentence of verse 12, 18-30, 34, 37 and 39-40. The original sources of these verses have been quoted at the end of each verse. In a few cases, the exact origins have not been confirmed.

These eighty verses are the most comprehensive exposition of the Maharshi's teaching. A number of translations have been made and commentaries written on them. They have been published as separate books by the ashram under the titles Ulladu Narpadu, Sad Vidya *and* Truth Revealed. *Bhagavan translated these verses into Telugu prose under the name of* Unnadi Nalubadi *and into Malayalam verse under the name of* Saddarsanam.

Invocation

1. Unless Reality exists, can thought of it arise? Since, devoid of thought, Reality exists within as Heart, how to know the Reality we term the Heart? To know That is merely to be That in the Heart.[2]

2. When those who are in dread of death seek refuge at the feet of the deathless, birthless Lord Supreme, their ego and attachments die; and they, now deathless, think no more of death.

The Text

1. Since we know the world, we must concede for both a common Source, single but with the power of seeming many. The picture of names and forms, the onlooker, the screen, the light that illumines — all these are verily He.

2. On three entities — the individual, God and the world — every creed is based. That 'the One becomes the three' and that 'always the three are three', are said only while the ego lasts. To lose the 'I' and in the Self to stay is the State Supreme.

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[2] The first sentence may also be rendered thus: Can there be Knowledge of Reality other than existing as Reality?

3. ‘The World is true’; ‘No, it is a false appearance’; ‘The World is Mind’; ‘No, it is not’; ‘The World is pleasant’; ‘No, it is not’ — What avails such talk? To leave the world alone and know the Self, to go beyond all thought of ‘One’ and ‘Two’, this egoless condition is the common goal of all.

4. If Self has form, the world and God likewise have form. If Self is without form, by whom and how can form (of world and God) be seen? Without the eye, can there be sight or spectacle? The Self, the real Eye, is infinite.

5. The body is made up of the five sheaths;[3] in the term body all the five are included. Without the body the world is not. Has one without the body ever seen the world?

6. The world is made up of the five kinds of sense perceptions and nothing else. And those perceptions are felt as objects by the five senses. Since through the senses the mind alone perceives the world, is the world other than the mind?

7. Though the world and mind rise and fade together, the world shines by the light of the mind. The ground whence the world and mind arise, and wherein they set, that Perfection rises not nor sets but ever shines. That is Reality.

8. Under whatever name or form we worship It, It leads us on to knowledge of the nameless, formless Absolute. Yet, to see one’s true Self in the Absolute, to subside into It and be one with It, this is the true Knowledge of the Truth.

9. ‘Twos’ and ‘threes’ depend upon one thing, the ego. If one asks in one’s Heart, ‘What is this ego?’ and finds it, they slip away. Only those who have found this know the Truth, and they will never be perplexed.[4]

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[3] The five sheaths include the mental.

[4] “Twos” are pairs like pleasure-pain, knowledge-ignorance; “threes” are triads like the knower, knowledge and the known.

10. There is no knowledge without ignorance; and without knowledge ignorance cannot be. To ask, 'Whose is this knowledge? Whose this ignorance?' and thus to know the primal Self, this alone is Knowledge.

11. Without knowing the Self that knows, to know all objects is not knowledge; it is only ignorance. Self, the ground of knowledge and the non-Self, being known, both knowledge and ignorance fall away.

12. True Knowledge is being devoid of knowledge as well as ignorance of objects. Knowledge of objects is not true knowledge. Since the Self shines self-luminous, with nothing else for It to know, with nothing else to know It, the Self is Knowledge. Nescience It is not.

13. The Self that is Awareness, that alone is true. The knowledge which is various is ignorance. And even ignorance, which is false, cannot exist apart from the Self. False are the many jewels, for apart from gold, which alone is true, they cannot exist.

14. 'You' and 'he' — these appear only when 'I' does. But when the nature of the 'I' is sought and the ego is destroyed, 'you' and 'he' are at an end. What shines then as the One alone is the true Self.

15. Past and future are dependent on the present. The past was present in its time and the future will be present too. Ever-present is the present. To seek to know the future and the past, without knowing the truth of time today, is to try to count without the number 'One'.

16. Without us there is no time nor space. If we are only bodies, we are caught up in time and space. But are we bodies? Now, then and always — here, now and everywhere — we are the same. We exist, timeless and spaceless we.

17. To those who do not know the Self and to those who do, the body is the 'I'. But to those who do not know the Self the 'I' is bounded by the body; while to those who within the body know the Self the 'I' shines boundless. Such is the difference between them.

18. To those who do not know and to those who do, the world is real. But to those who do not know, Reality is bounded by the world; while to those who know, Reality shines formless as the ground of the world. Such is the difference between them.

19. The debate, 'Does free will prevail or fate?' is only for those who do not know the root of both. Those who have known the Self, the common source of freewill and of fate, have passed beyond them both and will not return to them.

20. To see God and not the Self that sees is only to see a projection of the mind. It is said that God is seen by him alone who sees the Self; but one who has lost the ego and seen the Self is none other than God.

21. When scriptures speak of 'seeing the Self' and 'seeing God', what is the truth they mean? How to see the Self? As the Self is one without a second, it is impossible to see it. How to see God? To see Him is to be consumed by Him.

22. Without turning inwards and merging in the Lord — it is His light that shines within the mind and lends it all its light — how can we know the Light of lights with the borrowed light of the mind?

23. The body says not it is 'I'. And no one says, "In sleep there is no 'I'." When 'I' arises all (other) things arise. Whence this 'I' arises, search with a keen mind.

24. The body which is matter says not 'I'. Eternal Awareness rises not nor sets. Betwixt the two, bound by the body, rises the thought of 'I'. This is the knot of matter and

Awareness. This is bondage, *jiva*, subtle body, ego. This is *samsara*, this is the mind.

25. Holding a form it rises; holding a form it stays; holding and feeding on a form it thrives. Leaving one form, it takes hold of another. When sought, it takes to flight. Such is the ego-ghost with no form of its own.

26. When the ego rises all things rise with it. When the ego is not, there is nothing else. Since the ego thus is everything, to question 'What is this thing?' is the extinction of all things.

27. 'That' we are, when 'I' has not arisen. Without searching whence the 'I' arises, how to attain the self-extinction where no 'I' arises? Without attaining self-extinction, how to stay in one's true state where the Self is 'That'?

28. Controlling speech and breath, and diving deep within oneself — like one who, to find a thing that has fallen into water, dives deep down — one must seek out the source whence the aspiring ego springs.

29. Cease all talk of 'I' and search with inward diving mind whence the thought of 'I' springs up. This is the way of wisdom. To think, instead, 'I am not this, but That I am,' is helpful in the search, but it is not the search itself.

30. When the mind turns inward seeking 'Who am I?' and merges in the Heart, then the 'I' hangs down his head in shame and the One 'I' appears as Itself. Though it appears as 'I-I', it is not the ego. It is Reality, Perfection, the Substance of the Self.

31. For him who is the Bliss of Self arising from extinction of the ego, what is there to do? He knows nothing other than this Self. How to conceive the nature of his state?

32. When the Vedas have declared, ‘Thou art That’ — not to seek and find the nature of the Self and abide in It, but to think ‘I am That, not This’ is want of strength. Because, That abides for ever as the Self.

33. To say ‘I do not know myself’ or ‘I have known myself’ is cause for laughter. What? Are there two selves, one to be known by the other? There is but One, the Truth of the experience of all.

34. The natural and true Reality forever resides in the Heart of all. Not to realize It there and stay in It but to quarrel ‘It is’, ‘It is not’, ‘It has form’, ‘It has not form’, ‘It is one’, ‘It is two’, ‘It is neither’, this is the mischief of *maya*.

35. To discern and abide in the ever-present Reality is true attainment. All other attainments are like powers enjoyed in a dream. When the sleeper wakes, are they real? Those who stay in the state of Truth, having cast off the unreal — will they ever be deluded?

36. If we think we are the body, then to tell ourselves, ‘No, I am That’, is helpful to abide as That. Yet — since ever we abide as That — why should we always think, ‘I am That?’ Does one ever think, ‘I am a man’?

37. ‘During the search, duality; on attainment, unity’ — This doctrine too is false. When eagerly he sought himself and later when he found himself, the tenth man in the story was the tenth man and none else (ten men crossed a stream and wanted to make sure they were all safe. In counting, each one left himself out and found only nine. A passer-by gave each a blow and made them count the ten blows).

38. If we are the doers of deeds, we should reap the fruits they yield. But when we question, ‘Who am I, the doer of this

deed?' and realize the Self, the sense of agency is lost and the three *karmas* slip away. Eternal is this Liberation.

39. Thoughts of bondage and of freedom last only as long as one feels, 'I am bound'. When one inquires of oneself, 'Who am I, the bound one?' the Self, Eternal, ever free, remains. The thought of bondage goes; and with it goes the thought of freedom too.

40. If asked, 'Which of these three is final liberation: With form, without form, or with-and-without-form?' I say, Liberation is the extinction of the ego which enquires 'With form, without form, or with-and-without-form?'

(Translated by Prof. K. Swaminathan)

Reality in Forty Verses: Supplement

Invocation

That which is the Support, the Soul, the Source, the Purpose and the Power of all this world, the Reality behind all this Appearance, That indeed exists. Let That, the Truth, abide in our Heart. (*Yoga Vasishta*, 8, v.12)

The Text

1. In the company of sages, attachment vanishes; and with attachment, illusion. Freed from illusion, one attains stability, and thence liberation while yet alive. Seek therefore the company of sages. (from *Bhajagovindam*, the "Mohamudagaram Hymn," by Shankaracharya)

2. Not by listening to preachers, nor by study of books, not by meritorious deeds nor by any other means can one attain that Supreme State, which is attainable only through association with the sages and the clear quest of the Self. (a verse from the *Yoga Vasishta,* 5 - 12 - v.17)

3. When one has learned to love the company of sages, wherefore all these rules of discipline? When a pleasant, cool southern breeze is blowing, what need is there for a fan? (a verse from the *Yoga Vasishta*)

4. Fever is overcome by the cool light of the moon; want, by the good wish-yielding tree; and sin by the Holy Ganges. Those three — fever and want and sin — all flee at the august sight of the peerless sage. (*Subhashita Ratna Bhandargara*, chapt. 3, v. 6)

5. Holy rivers, which are only water, and idols, which are made of stone and clay, are not as mighty as the sages. For while they make one pure in course of countless days, the sage's eyes by a mere glance purify at once. (from *Srimad Bhagavatam*, chapt. 48, v. 31, tenth canto)

6. **Disciple:** Who is God?

Master: He who knows the mind.

D: My Self, the Spirit, knows my mind.

M: Therefore you are God; and also the *sruti* declares that there is only one God, the Knower.

7. **M:** By what light do you see?

D: The sun by day, the lamp by night.

M: By what light do you see these lights?

D: The eye.

M: By what light do you see the eye?

D: The mind.

M: By what light do you know the mind?

D: My Self.

M: You then are the Light of Lights.

D: Yes, That I am.

(from *Ekasloki*, by Shankaracharya)

8. In the centre of the Heart-Cave there shines alone the one Brahman as the 'I, I', the Atman. Reach the Heart by diving deep in quest of the Self, or by controlling the mind with the breath, and stay established in the Atman.[1]

9. In the lotus of the Heart is pure and changeless Consciousness in the form of the Self. When the ego is removed, this Consciousness of Self bestows liberation of soul. (*Devikalottaram*, v. 46)

10. The body is like an earthen pot, inert. Because it has no consciousness of 'I', and because daily in bodiless sleep we touch our real nature, the body is not 'I'. Then who is this 'I'? Where is this 'I'? In the Heart-cave of those that question thus, there shineth forth as 'I', Himself, the Lord Siva of Arunachala.[2]

11. *Who is born? It is only he who asks 'Whence am I born?' that is truly born in* Brahman, *the Prime Source. He indeed is born eternally; He is the Lord of saints; He is the ever-new.* (On celebrating Sri Bhagavan's jayanti))

12. *Cast off the notion, 'This vile flesh am I,' and seek the ceaseless bliss of Self.* To seek the Self while cherishing this perishing flesh is like trying to cross a stream by clinging to a crocodile.[3]

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[1] In 1915 when Bhagavan was living in Skandasramam, a young devotee, Jagadiswara Sastri, wrote on a piece of paper in Sanskrit the words *hridaya kuhara madhye* (in the interior of the Heart-cavern). He then went out on some business. When he returned he found to his surprise a complete Sanskrit verse beginning with those words and learned that Bhagavan had written it. This verse was later translated into Tamil by Bhagavan and incorporated in the *Forty Verses Supplement*. Kavyakanta Ganapati Muni also included this verse in his *Sri Ramana Gita,* ch. II, v. 2

[2] The Maharshi originally composed this verse in Sanskrit and then later translated it into Tamil.

[3] The first two lines of the original verse were composed by the Maharshi and the second two are from the *Vivekachudamani,* v. 84

13. The way of charity, penance, sacrifice, dharma, yoga and bhakti; and the Goal of Heaven, Reality, Peace, Truth, Grace, Silence, Stability, Deathless Death, Knowledge, Renunciation, Liberation, Bliss — all this is only ceasing to think that the body is the Self.

14. What is action, or devotion, or union, or knowledge? It is to inquire, 'Whose is this action, or indifference, or separateness, or ignorance?' Inquiring thus, the ego vanishes. To abide as the Self, wherein these eight have never been, this is True existence.

15. Not realizing that they themselves are moved by an energy not their own, some fools are busy seeking miraculous powers. Their antics are like the boasting of a cripple who says to his friends: 'If you raise me to my feet, these enemies are nothing before me.'

16. Since the stilling of the mind is true liberation and miraculous powers are unattainable without an act of the mind, how can they whose mind is set on such powers enter the bliss of liberation which is the ending of all activity of the mind?

17. While God sustains the burden of the world, the spurious ego assumes its burden, grimacing like an image on a tower, seeming to support it. If the traveller in a carriage, which can carry any weight, does not lay his luggage down but carries it painfully on his head, whose is the fault?

18. Between the two paps, below the chest, above the stomach, there are six organs of various colours. Of these, one, looking like a lily bud, is the Heart, at two digits' distance to the right of the centre. (from *Ashtanga Hridayam*, Malayalam)

19. Its mouth is closed. Within its cavity is seated a heavy darkness, filled with all desires; all the great nerves are centred

there; the home it is of breath, mind, light of knowledge. (from *Ashtanga Hridayam*, Malayalam)

20. The Lord whose home is the interior of the Heart-Lotus is extolled as Lord of the Cave. If by force of practice the feeling 'I am He, I am the Lord of the Cave' becomes firmly established, as firmly as your present notion that you are the ego is established in the body, and thus you stand forth as that Lord of the Cave, the illusion that you are the perishable body will vanish like darkness before the rising sun. (composed by Bhagavan, employing the ideas of two verses found in the *Prabhulinga Leela, v. 45, 46,* Kannada)

21. When Rama asked, 'Which is the great mirror in which we see these images of things? What is it that is called the Heart of all the beings in the world?' Vasishta answered, 'When we reflect we see that all the beings in the world have two different hearts.' (*Yoga Vasishta*, 5 - 78 - v. 32, 33)

22. One of these is worth acceptance, the other worth rejection. Listen how they differ. The organ called the heart placed somewhere in the chest of the physical body is worth rejection. The Heart which is of the form of Pure Awareness is worth acceptance; it is both within and without — it has no inside or out. (*Yoga Vasishta*, 5 - 78 - v. 34, 35)

23. That indeed is the essential Heart and in it all this world abides. It is the mirror in which all things are seen. It is the source of all wealth. Hence Awareness may be termed the Heart of all beings. The Heart is not a part of the perishable body inert like a stone. (*Yoga Vasishta*, 5 - 78 - 36, 37)

24. Therefore by the practice of merging the ego in the pure Heart which is all-Awareness, the tendencies of the mind as well as the breath will be subdued. (*Yoga Vasishta*, 5 - 78 - v. 38)

25. By constantly meditating in the Heart, 'That pure unconditioned Awareness that is Siva, That am I,' remove all attachment of the ego. (*Devikalottara*, v. 47)

26. Having investigated the various states of being, and seizing firmly by the mind that State of Supreme Reality, play your part, O hero, ever in the world. You have known the Truth which is at the Heart of all kinds of appearances. Without ever turning away from that Reality, play in the world, O hero, as if in love with it. (Y*oga Vasishta*, 5 - 18 - v. 20 to 23)

27. Seeming to have enthusiasm and delight, seeming to have excitement and aversion, seeming to exercise initiative and perseverance, and yet without attachment, play, O hero, in the world. Released from all bonds of attachment and with equanimity of mind, acting outwardly in all situations in accordance with the part you have assumed, play as you please, O hero, in the world. (*Yoga Vasishta*, 5 - 18 - v. 24 to 26)

28. He who by Knowledge of the *Atman* is established in the Truth, he who has vanquished the five senses — call him the fire of knowledge, the wielder of the thunderbolt of Knowledge, the Conqueror of Time and the Hero who has slain death. (a verse from the *Yoga Vasishta*)

29. Just as on the earth with the coming of spring the tree shines in fresh beauty of foliage, even so he who has seen the Truth will shine with growing lustre, intelligence and power. (*Yoga Vasishta*, 5 - 76 - v. 20)

30. Like one to whom a tale is told while his thoughts are wandering far away, the mind which is free from attachment is inactive while it acts. But the mind immersed in attachments is active, though it does not act, like the sleeper lying motionless here, who in his dream climbs a hill and tumbles down. (*Yoga Vasishta*, 5 - 56 - v. 13, 14)

31. As the movement of the cart, its standing still and its being unyoked are to the passenger asleep in the cart, even so are action, contemplation and sleep to the Sage asleep in the cart of his body.

32. For one who seeks waking, dreaming or sleep there is a state beyond these three, a wakeful sleep, a fourth state called the turiya. But because this turiya state alone is real and the three apparent states are illusory, the 'fourth' state is indeed the transcendental state.

33. The statement that the jnani retains prarabdha while free from sanchita and agami is only a formal answer to the questions of the ignorant. Of several wives none escapes widowhood when the husband dies; even so, when the doer goes, all three karmas vanish.[4]

34. For unlearned folk there is only one family consisting of wife, children and dependants. But in the mind of those with much learning there are many families of books, theories and opinions as obstacles to yoga. (*Subhashita Ratna Bhandagara*, Prakarana VI, Shanta Rasa Nirdesha, v. 13)

35. What is the use of letters to those lettered folk who do not seek to wipe out the letters of fate by inquiring, 'Whence are we born?' What else are they but gramaphones, O Lord of Arunachala? They learn and repeat words without realizing their meaning.

36. The unlettered are easier saved than those who are learned but unsubdued. The unlettered are free from the clutches of the demon Pride, they are free from the malady of many whirling thoughts and words; they are free from the mad pursuit of wealth; they are free from many, many ills.

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[4] *Sanchita* is karma accumulated in the past; *Agami* is karma to be worked out in the future; *Prarabdha* is karma working out in the present.

37. Though a man looks on the world as a wisp of straw and holds all sacred lore in his hand, it is hard for him to escape from thralldom if he has yielded to vile Flattery, the harlot. (from *Sadhaka Avasta*, by Sri Sadasiva Brahmendra)

38. Without thinking of oneself as apart from others, without swerving from one's true state, if one abides always in one's Self, who is there alien to one? What matters it what people say of one? What matters it if one praises or blames oneself?

39. Keep *advaita* within the Heart. Do not ever carry it into action. Even if you apply it to all the three worlds, O Son, it is not to be applied to the Guru. (*Tattvopadesa*, v. 87, by Shankaracharya)

40. I shall declare truly the essence of the final doctrine of the Vedanta: when the ego dies and becomes That, the Self of Pure Awareness, That alone abides.

(Translated by Prof. K. Swaminathan)

7

Five Verses on the Self

These are the last verses composed by Bhagavan. They were written at the instance of a devotee, Suri Nagamma, the author of Letters from Sri Ramanasramam. *He wrote them first in Telugu, but to a Tamil metrical form called* venba, *and then translated them into Tamil. Since there was already a composition of Shankaracharya called the* Atma Panchakam, *Bhagavan decided to call his composition* Ekatma Panchakam.

1. When, forgetting the Self, one thinks
That the body is oneself and goes
Through innumerable births
And in the end remembers and becomes
The Self, know this is only like
Awaking from a dream wherein
One has wandered over all the world.

2. One ever is the Self. To ask oneself
'Who and whereabouts am I?'
Is like the drunken man's enquiring
'Who am I?' and 'Where am I?'

3. The body is within the Self. And yet
One thinks one is inside the inert body,
Like some spectator who supposes
That the screen on which the picture is thrown
Is within the picture.

4. Does an ornament of gold exist
Apart from the gold? Can the body exist
Apart from the Self?
The ignorant one thinks ‘I am the body’;
The enlightened knows ‘I am the Self’.

5. The Self alone, the Sole Reality,
Exists for ever.
If of yore the First of Teachers
Revealed it through unbroken silence
Say who can reveal it in spoken words?

(Translated by Prof. K. Swaminathan)

8

Miscellaneous Verses

The Song of the Poppadum

In 1914 or 1915, Bhagavan was living in Virupaksha Cave with his mother, who did most of the cooking. He himself was a skilled cook and both then and later often helped to prepare the food. On one occasion his mother was making poppadum, *a thin round cake made of black gram flour fried crisp, and she called him to help her. Instead of doing so, however, he composed this poem giving instructions for spiritual development under the symbolism of making* poppadum.

1. Try and make some *poppadums*.
   Eat them and your longing satisfy.
   Don't roam the world disconsolate.
   Heed the word, unique, unspoken
   Taught by the teacher true who teaches
   The truth of Being-Awareness-Bliss.
   Try and make some . . . satisfy.

2. Take the black-gram, ego-self,
   Growing in the fivefold body-field[1]

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[1] The Hindu philosophical doctrines recognize the existence of subtler bodies of the human being, each functioning in a finer realm. The five sheaths mentioned in the text are included in the three human bodies — material, subtle, and causal. These sheaths are: the physical, vital, mental, intellectual, and the blissful sheaths. For a description, see the *Vivekachudamani.*

And grind it in the quern,
The wisdom-quest of 'Who am l?'
Reducing it to finest flour.
Try and make some . . . satisfy.

3. Mix it with *pirandai*-juice,
Which is holy company,
Add mind-control, the cummin-seed,
The pepper of self-restraint,
The salt of non-attachment,
And asafoetida, the aroma
Of virtuous inclination.
Try and make some . . . satisfy.

4. In the Heart-mortar place the dough.
And with mind-pestle inward turned,
Pound it hard with strokes of 'I', 'I',
Then flatten it with the rolling-pin
Of stillness on the level slab (of Being).
Work away, untiring, steady, cheerful.
Try and make some . . . satisfy.

5. Put the *poppadum* in the ghee of *Brahman*
Held in the pan of infinite silence
And fry it over the fire of knowledge.
Now as I transmuted into That,
Eat and taste the Self as Self,
Abiding as the Self alone.
Try and make some . . . satisfy.

(Translated by Prof. K. Swaminathan)

Self-Knowledge

(Atma-Vidya)

A devotee once wrote on a slip of paper that Self-knowledge is the easiest thing, since one already is the Self, and handed it to Bhagavan, asking him to write a poem on the subject. Bhagavan responded with the following poem:

Lo, very easy is Self-Knowledge,
Lo, very easy indeed.

1 Even for the most infirm
So real is the Self
That compared with it the *amlak*
In one's hand appears a mere illusion.

2. True, strong, fresh for ever stands
The Self. From this in truth spring forth
The phantom body and phantom world.
When this delusion is destroyed
And not a speck remains,
The Sun of Self shines bright and real
In the vast Heart-expanse.
Darkness dies, afflictions end,
And bliss wells up.

3. The thought 'I am the body' is the thread
On which are strung together various thoughts.
Questing within, enquiring 'Who am I?
And whence this thought?' all other thoughts
Vanish. And as I, as I within the Heart-cave

The Self shines of its own accord.
Such Self-awareness is the only Heaven,
This stillness, this abode of bliss.

4. Of what avail is knowing things
Other than the Self? And the Self being known,
What other thing is there to know?
That one light that shines as many selves,
Seeing this Self within
As Awareness' lightning flash;
The play of Grace; the ego's death;
The blossoming of bliss.

5. For loosening karma's bonds and ending births,
This path is easier than all other paths.
Abide in stillness, without any stir
Of tongue, mind, body. And behold
The effulgence of the Self within;
The experience of Eternity; absence
Of all fear; the ocean vast of Bliss.

6. Annamalai the Self, the Eye
Behind the eye of mind which sees
The eye and all the other senses
Which know the sky and other elements,
The Being which contains, reveals, perceives
The inner sky that shines within the Heart.
When the mind free of thought turns inward,
Annamalai appears as my own Self.
True, Grace is needed; Love is added.
Bliss wells up.

(Translated by Prof. K. Swaminathan)

Verses on the Celebration of Bhagavan's Birthday

Bhagavan was born on December 30, 1879. His birthday, however, is observed according to the Tamil calendar in dhanurmasa *when the moon is with the star* Punarvasu. *According to the Western calendar this day falls in the months of December-January. When it was first proposed in 1912, Bhagavan expressed his objection in the form of the following two verses. Even so, his disciples were not deterred and the Jayanti day festival continues to be one of the great annual events at the Ashram*

1. You who wish to celebrate a birthday, inquire first who was born. One's true birthday is when one enters into the Eternal Being which shines forever without birth or death.

2. Of all days on one's birthday one should mourn one's fall (into *samsara*). To celebrate it as a festival is like adorning and glorifying a corpse. To seek one's Self and merge in it is wisdom.

Complaint of the Stomach

One day there had been feasting at the Ashram. Many had been upset by the large quantity of rich food. Someone quoted the following complaint about the stomach by the Tamil poet, Avvayar: 'You will not go without food even for one day, nor will you take enough for two days at a time. You have no idea of the trouble I have on your account, Oh wretched stomach! It is impossible to get on with you!'

Bhagavan immediately replied with a parody giving the stomach's complaint against the ego.

'You will not give even an hour's rest to me, you stomach! Day after day, every hour, you keep on eating. You have no idea how I suffer, Oh troublemaking ego! It is impossible to get on with you!'

Nine Stray Verses

An old devotee, Somasundara Swami, once begged Bhagavan to write in his notebook at least an akshara *(a single syllable). An* akshara *also means undecaying and denotes* Brahman. *Bhagavan wrote a short epigram on the difficulty of writing down the* akshara. *This is the first verse below. The remaining verses were written at odd times by Bhagavan and included in some of the poems of Muruganar. The order used here was suggested by Bhagavan.*

1

One syllable shines forever in the Heart as Self.
Who is there anywhere who can write it down?

2

Incantation reaching to the source of sound is the best course for those who are not firm in consciousness, which is the source of the 'I'.

3

He who mistakes this excreta-making body for Self
is worse than one who, born a pig, for food takes excreta.

4

Incessant search for Self, the love supreme of God we call.
For He alone as Self abides within the Heart of all.

5

What introverted mind calls peace, outside as power is shown;
Those who have reached and found this truth, their unity have known.

6

He who's contented with his lot, from jealousy is free;
Balanced in affluence and mishap; not bound by action he.

7

By him alone who's saved himself can other folk be freed;
The help of others is as if the blind the blind, would lead.

8

Question and answer are of speech, duality their sphere;
Impossible in monism to find them anywhere.

9

There is no creation, no destruction, none bound, none seeking, striving, gaining freedom. Know that this
is the Truth surpreme.

Apology to Hornets

One day when Bhagavan was climbing the Hill he knocked against a hornets' nest and was attacked and very badly stung on the leg and thigh. He felt remorse for having disturbed them.

Questioned by Muruganar in the form of the following verse:

Sighting an overgrown, green-leaved bush, and
When stepping on it and stung by hornets to have legs swollen,
Venkata, in truth, why was an accidental intrusion
Treated without mercy, just as a wanton transgression?

Sri Bhagavan responded likewise in verse:

When I was stung by hornets in revenge
Upon the leg until it was inflamed,
Although it was by chance I stepped upon
Their nest, constructed in a leafy bush;
What kind of mind is his if he does not
At least repent for doing such a wrong?

Reply to the Mother

At the outset, when Bhagavan left home, his family tried to trace him, but failed. Only some years later they discovered him at Tiruvannamalai. The Mother, not yet ripe to renounce the world and join him, went to persuade her son to return home. It was in December of 1998. At this time Bhagavan was not speaking and sat in apparent indifference to her pleas. One Pachaiappa Pillai who was nearby gave Bhagavan a paper and pencil and asked him to at least write a few words of consolation to his mother. He wrote briefly that whatever is destined to happen will happen.

The following poetic rendering by A. W. Chadwick (Sadhu Arunachala) was checked over by Sri Bhagavan.

The fates of souls are all by God ordained
According to the deeds that they have done.
That end that's destined ne'er to be attained
Will never be achieved by anyone
However hard they try. All those things, too
That are destined must occur one day,
Will come to pass whatever you may do
To interfere and try their course to stay,
And this is certain. At length we come to see
That it is best that we should silent be.

For the Mother's Recovery

In 1914, Bhagavan's mother, returning from a pilgrimage to Tirupati, paid a brief visit to him at Tiruvannamalai. While there she had a severe attack of fever, which some thought to be typhoid. Her life was despaired of and Bhagavan composed the following poem for her recovery. Needless to say, she recovered. Two years later she came and took up her abode permanently at Bhagavan's Ashram on the hill.

1. Hill of my refuge that cures the ills of recurring births! O Lord! It is for Thee to cure my mother's fever.

2. O God that smitest Death itself? My sole refuge! Vouchsafe Thy grace unto my mother and shield her from Death. What is Death if scrutinised?

3. Arunachala! Thou blazing fire of *Jnana*! Deign to wrap my mother in Thy light and make her one with Thee. What need then for cremation?[1]

4. Arunachala, that chasest away illusion (*maya*)! Why delayest Thou to dispel my mother's delirium! Besides Thee, is there anyone who with maternal solicitude can protect the suppliant soul and ward off the strokes of destiny?

(Translated by Prof. K. Swaminathan)

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1. This was literally fulfilled on May 19, 1922.

Arunachala Ramana

A devotee named Amritanatha Yati wrote on a paper a Malayalam verse imploring Bhagavan to say whether he was Hari (Vishnu) or Sivaguru (Subrahmanya) or Yativara (Siva) or Vararuchi. Bhagavan wrote his reply in the same Malayalam metre on the same paper. A translation of it is given below.

In the recesses of the lotus-shaped Hearts of all, beginning with Vishnu, there shines as pure intellect (Absolute Consciousness) the *Paramatman*, who is the same as Arunachala Ramana. When the mind melts with love of Him, and reaches the inmost recess of the Heart wherein He dwells as the beloved, the subtle eye of pure intellect opens and He reveals Himself as Pure Consciousness.

The Self in the Heart

This is a poetical version of the eighth stanza of Reality in Forty Verses: Supplement. *The circumstances in which it was written are explained in the footnote to that stanza.*

In the inmost core, the Heart
Shines as *Brahman* alone,
As 'I-I', the Self aware.
Enter deep into the Heart
By search for Self, or diving deep,
With breath under check.
Thus abide ever in *Atman*.

9

Occasional Verses

Tiruchuzhi

After hearing verse composed by Manikkavachagar on Tiruchuzhi, Bhagavan composed the following verse.

Self that dances as unbroken bliss in devotees' Hearts, Siva unique, the light supreme that shines unceasing in bright Tiruchuzhi, bestow your grace on me and shine as Heart within my heart.

(Translated by Prof. K. Swaminathan)

Hara and Uma

In a verse, Easwara Swami one day questioned Bhagavan thus:

> *Immaculate one, kindly tell me the names of the flowing river, the dancing Hara and the Uma in the enduring Tiruchuzhi.*

Bhagavan then composed the following answer in verse form:

> As it destroys the sins of those who bathe in it, the river flowing through Tiruchuzhi is known as Pavahari. As the Lord is worshipped by the entire world, he is known as Bhumisa. The name of the Devi is Tunaimalai Ammai.

Hometown and Parents

While living on the Arunachala Hill, Easwara Swami wrote the following verse, requesting to know from Sri Bhagavan his hometown and parents' names:

Ramana, living in flourishing Sri Aruna, I thought you should ponder and tell your history, at once.
Give place Of origin and parents' names for me to know, and when received the world will be fortunate.

In response, Sri Bhagavan wrote:

The mind and self of the true seer abides without ever leaving the sunset-coloured One.
However, my father was Sundara,
of tree-surrounded Tiruchuzhi and my mother was
Alagamma, the worshipper of his Feet.

Marks of Muruga

To a question why the marks of Muruga are not visible in Ramana.

The javelin, the bright eastern hill, the Mother's
milk of grace, the twelve arms, the big blue
peacock, mind-beguiling, all these are there in
the measure that one lives in the world in fear
of Ramana the Mother (in fear of Ramana's mother).

On Subrahmanya

T. K. Sundaresa Iyer desired to have a Tamil version of a Sanskrit stanza on God Subrahmanya with the substitution of Ramana for the God's name. Sri Bhagavan wrote the following.

Destroyer of the darkness (of nescience) in the virtuous, Cave-dweller, imperishable One compact of light, Sun eternal, wielder of the javelin of Awareness, Ramana in the Heart-Cave, Him let us adore.

(Translated by Prof. K. Swaminathan)

Virupaksha Cave

The formless and imperishable Being stands revealed in this my Aruna Hill, the embodied Presence of the three-eyed God. Since the Virupaksha Cave sustains the devotees themselves who dwell within the Heart-cave of that God, well may we call it Mother.

(Translated by Prof. K. Swaminathan)

The Cow Lakshmi

On Friday, the fifth of *Ani*, in the year
Sarvadhari, the twelfth day of the waxing moon,
under the asterism *Visakha*, the cow Lakshmi
attained *mukti*.

Ganesa

This is a prayer to Lord Ganesa, the remover of all obstacles. Reference is made to the Puranic story that Ganesa served as a scribe to Vyasa and wrote down the Mahabharata. *Ganesa's grace is invoked for the protection of theVedanta philosophy.*

> O Vinayaka, who wrote on a scroll (i.e., the slopes of Mt. Meru) the words of the Great Sage (i.e., Vyasa) and who presides at the victorious Arunachala, do remove the disease (i.e., maya) that is the cause of repeated births, and protect graciously the great Noble Faith which brims with the honey of the Self.

Vishnu

> Whenever *dharma* wanes and *adharma* waxes,
> you take birth for sustaining virtue and the
> virtuous and laying low all wickedness. Thus
> you renew earth-life, mysterious One. Who then
> are we to conceive your form?

Dipavali

The following two verses explain the significance of Dipavali *(the festival of lights):*

> The demon Naraka (ego) who rules hell, (having)
> The notion that I am this body,
> — "Where is this demon?" enquiring thus
> With the discus of jnana, Narayana
> Destroys the demon. And this day
> Is Naraka-chaturdasi.

Shining as the Self in glory
After slaying Naraka,
The sinner vile who suffered much
Because he deemed as “I” the wretched
Home of pains, the body of flesh —
this is the festival of light,
Dipavali.

(Translated by Prof. K. Swaminathan)

Miracle of Dakshinamurti

Who is the youthful guru beneath the banyan tree?
Very old are the pupils who seek him.
The handsome teacher’s speech is silence.
Cleared are all the pupils’ doubts.

Under the wonderful banyan tree shines the youthful guru. Aged pupils come to him. Silence is this teacher’s speech. Gone are the doubts in the pupils’ minds.

The Self

If one realizes one’s true nature within one’s Heart,
it is the plenitude of Being-Awareness-Bliss
without beginning or end.

Liberation

The dove escaping from the hunter’s hand
escapes too from the forest, it is said. When
the hunter hunting for the ‘I’ gains freedom,
the forest shrinks into a home.

Silence

An article about Bhagavan, written by a devotee, was entitled, "Where Silence is an Inspired Sermon". On seeing this, Bhagavan wrote the Tamil verse, which is translated below:

Silence, the unique language, ever surging in the Heart, is the state of grace.

One Letter

Akshara is a unique letter. You earnestly desired that I should write that unique letter in this book. As that unique letter shines forever, of its own accord, as the Self in the Heart, who indeed can write it down?

Sleep while Awake

Deep sleep can e'er be had while wide awake
By search for Self. In dream and waking states
Pursue the quest for Self without a break
So long as sleep's ignorance them permeates.

A Jnani and His Body

This was written in Sri Bhagavan's last days.

As one lets go the leaf after eating the food,
the seer sheds his body.

PART TWO

ADAPTATIONS AND TRANSLATIONS

10

The Song Celestial

Bhagavan was speaking once with a visiting pandit *about the great merits of the* Bhagavad Gita, *when a devotee complained that it was difficult to keep all the seven hundred verses in mind and asked if there was not one verse that could be remembered as the quintessence of the* Gita. *Bhagavan thereupon mentioned Chapter X, verse 20: 'I am the Self, Oh Gudakesa, dwelling in the Heart of every being; I am the beginning and the middle and also the end of all beings.' Later he selected forty-two verses that here follow (of which that quoted above comes fourth) and arranged them in an appropriate order to serve as guidance. He also prepared Tamil and Malayalam versions of these verses.*

Said Sanjaya:

1. Despondent, overwhelmed with compassion (as he sat), his troubled eyes filled with tears, Krishna, the slayer of Madhu spoke to him. ii: 1

Sri Bhagavan said:

2. This body, O Son of Kunti,[1] is known as the field; and he who is aware of it is called the Knower of the Field by the wise. xiii:1

[1] Arjuna.

3. And know that I am the Knower of the Field in all the fields, O Bharata. The knowledge of the field and the knower of that, in my opinion, is true knowledge. xiii:2

4. I am the Self, O Gudakesa, dwelling in the Hearts of all beings. I am the beginning and the middle and the end of all beings. x:20

5. For to him who is born death is indeed certain, and to him who dies birth is certain. Therefore you should not grieve for the inevitable. ii:27

6. That is not born, nor does It ever die; nor, having been, does It ever cease to be. That unborn, eternal, abiding, primeval Being is not slain when the body is slain. ii:20

7. Invulnerable He is, not to be burnt, not to be drenched or dried. He is eternal, all pervading, changeless, motionless, enduring. ii:24

8. Know that which pervades all this to be indestructible. That immutable none can destroy. ii:27

9. The unreal has no being, the Real no non-being. These two facts the Truth-seers perceive. ii:16

10. Just as the all pervading ether, being subtle, is not affected, (tainted or contaminated by anything), even so, the Self pervading the whole body is not tainted. xiii:33

11. Neither sun, nor moon, nor fire illumine this state on attaining which one does not return. And this is My supreme abode. xv:6

12. This Supreme State is called the Unmanifest Imperishable *(avyakto akshara).* That is My highest abode. For those who attain to It, there is no return. viii:21

13. The undeluded, those who are free from pride and ignorance, who have overcome the evil of attachment, who

are ever devoted to the Self, who have turned away from desires and are entirely beyond the dualities of pleasure and pain, attain that imperishable state. xv:5

14. He who abandons the injunctions of the scriptures and behaves according to the impulses of his desires, attains neither perfection, nor happiness, nor the highest state of salvation. xvi:23

15. He who sees the Supreme Lord, residing equally in all beings — the Imperishable One among the perishables — sees (truly). xiii:27

16. Only by unswerving devotion can I be known and truly seen in this form, Arjuna, and even be entered into, O tormentor of the foe. xi:54

17. The faith of everyone is according to his nature, O Bharata. Man is essentially endowed with faith. What his faith is, that indeed is he. xvii:3

18. One who has faith and concentration and has subdued his senses attains knowledge. Having gained knowledge he speedily attains Supreme Peace. iv:39

19. To them ever steadfast in loving worship, I give the yoga of understanding by which they attain to Me. x:10

20. Out of compassion for them, I, dwelling in their Heart, destroy the darkness born of ignorance with the effulgent light of knowledge. x:11

21. But in those whose unwisdom is destroyed by wisdom, that wisdom like the Sun, reveals the Supreme *(Param)*. v:16

22. Mighty, they say, are the senses, mightier than these, the mind, mightier than that the intellect, but mightier still is He. iii:42

23. Thus knowing Him who is beyond the intellect, O mighty in arms, control your self by the Self and slay the enemy in the form of desire, hard though it may be. iii:43

24. As a well lit fire consumes its fuel, Arjuna, so does the fire of knowledge reduce all activity to ashes. iv:37

25. One whose undertakings are all free from desire and whose activity has been purified in the flame of wisdom is termed a sage by those who know. iv: 19

26. *Brahma Nirvana* lies around those who have freed themselves from anger and desire, who have subdued their minds and have known the Self. v:26

27. One should gradually, gradually attain quietude with the intellect *(buddhi)* held steadfast and the mind sunk in the Self, allowing no thought to arise. vi:25

28. To whatever side the restless, unsteady mind wanders away, one should check it and bring it back controlled to the Self. vi:26

29. With the senses, mind and intellect subdued, the saint who devoutly seeks liberation, without desire, fear or wrath — he is indeed ever liberated. v:28

30. One who is thus integrated in yoga (*yoga yuktatma*) sees all with an equal eye, seeing himself in all beings and all beings in himself. vi:29

31. To those, however, who dwell on Me in single minded worship I guarantee fulfilment of their needs and security. ix:22

32. The foremost of these is the wise one *(jnani)* who is ever steadfast and devoted to the One. Very dear am I to the wise man and he to Me. vii: 17

33. At the end of many births the man of wisdom comes to Me, realising that Vasudeva is all. Such a great soul is very rare to find. vii: 19

34. When a man casts out all desires of the mind, O son of Pritha, and is content in himself he is said to be steadfast in wisdom. ii:35

35. He attains peace who abandons all desires, acting without attachment, free from 'I' and 'mine'. ii:71

36. He by whom the world is not afflicted and who is not afflicted by the world, who is free from pleasure, anger, fear and anxiety — he is dear to Me. xii: 15

37. The same in honour and dishonour, towards friends and foes; he who abandons the initiative in all undertakings, is called one beyond qualities. xiv:25

38. For him, however, who rejoices only in the Self, is gratified with the Self and content with the Self, no action is incumbent. iii: 17

39. He has nothing to gain by actions done or to lose by those undone. He is not dependent on anyone for the achievement of any object. iii:18

40. Satisfied with what comes to him by chance, beyond the pairs of opposites, free from envy, equal in success and failure, he is not bound by his actions. iv:22

41. The Lord resides in the Hearts of all, O Arjuna, revolving all creatures by *prakriti* as if mounted on a machine. xviii:61

42. Surrender unto Him with all your heart, O Bharata. Through His grace you will attain Supreme peace and the perennial abode. xviii:62

(Translated by Arthur Osborne and Prof. Kulkarni)

11

Translations from the Agamas

The Agamas *are traditional Hindu scriptures regarded as no less authoritative and authentic than the Vedas. They are regarded as divinely revealed teachings and no human authorship is ascribed to them. Temple worship is mainly founded upon them.*

There are twenty-eight Agamas *that are accepted as authorities. From among them* Sarva Jnanottara *and* Devikalottara *are outstanding expressions of the standpoint of pure* advaita *or non-duality.* Atma-Sakshatkara *is the most essential part of* Sarva Jnanottara.

The Maharshi spontaneously translated both of these Agamas *into Tamil verse —* Devikalottara *in the very early days when he was living in Virupaksha Cave and the* Atma-Sakshatkara *in 1933 when he was already in the Ashram at the foot of the hill. Both are instructions in the path of knowledge given by Lord Siva, the latter to his son Guha (another name for Lord Subrahmanya) and the former to his wife, Parvati.*

Verses 70-72 in Devikalottara, *which forbid the harming even of plant life, are not to be taken as applying to aspirants on the path. No extremes of discipline or behaviour are demanded of them. Indeed, as is generally indicated in these two* Agamas, *questions of discipline, ritual, and behaviour are far less important on this path than any other, since it is a path which works directly on the Heart, awakening spiritual knowledge.*

Atma Sakshatkara[1]

(All-Comprehensive Knowledge)

(Benedictory verse of Sri Bhagavan)

This is the Direct Awareness of the Self,
Graciously expounded to Guha by Ishvara Himself,
The foremost and first Lord, now teaching this in Tamil
Seated as the Self in my Heart.

That Siva further says:

1. Guha! I shall tell you about a different way
To reach that Reality which pervades partless in all,
Too subtle, though, to be grasped (by the mind).

2. By which the knowledge of Awareness is well-attained,
Knowing which is to become Siva Himself,
What has not been told to any by me,
Today, from me, that wisdom, hear!

3. Handed down by the lineage of gurus,
And beyond the ken of logicians,
This is for liberation from the bondage of the
birth-death cycle.
Its supreme vision shines at all places.

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[1] The chapter on Self-Realisation (*Atma Sakshatkara*) in an *upa-agama* text known as *Sarvajnanottara*, 'The Pinnacle of all Knowledge', translated from the Sanskrit original into Tamil by Bhagavan Sri Ramana.

4. He who is the One pervading all things,
He who has manifested as All,
He who has faces in all directions, who is beyond thought,
Who remains Himself as all the verities and transcends them too, is the Self.

5. He transcends all verities,
He is beyond the reach of speech, mind and name.
'I am That (Siva-Self)': thus you should meditate
With perfectly undifferentiated mind, on Siva.

6. Firmly established as the eternal entity,
Imperishable and undifferentiated,
The all-pervasive, partless Knowledge that cannot be fathomed by the mind,
It shines, with nothing prior to compare.

7. Without stain, indestructible, the totally serene,
The knowledge transcending all objects,
Beyond the pale of thought, conception and doubt,
That (Supreme) I am — no doubt about this.

8. That Supreme divinity, Siva, indeed am I,
Of the nature of all the mantras,
And transcending all the mantras,
Devoid of dissolution and creation.

9. What is visible, what is invisible, the moving and the stationary — all these are pervaded by me.
I am the Lord of this universe.
All shine because of me.

10. Filled with a variety of forms, one different from the other,
Filled with a galaxy of worlds,

All this universe, from Siva down to the earth,
Are all established in me.

11. Whatever is seen in this world,
Whatever is heard in this world,
Whatever shines, conceptualised as inside and outside,
All these are pervaded by me, the all-pervading One. Realise this.

12. Though considering himself the Self,
He desires to attain that Siva, the Supreme Self, as one apart.
Whoever contemplates on Siva thus in delusion,
Will not attain Sivahood by such contemplation — know this.

13. 'Siva is other than I; I am other than Siva' —
Uproot this attitude of differentiation.
'I indeed am that Siva' —
This conviction that is non-dual, ever practise.

14. Full of this non-dual conviction,
He who, everywhere, abides ever in the Self,
Shall see, in all things, in all bodies,
Only that Siva-self — of this, there is no doubt.

15. Whoever has this conviction always, of the one Self,
Shall rid himself of delusion, and dual perception.
That yogi will attain to omniscience —
So it is said in the Vedas. This you should know.

16. He who is praised in all scriptures
As the unborn, the Ishwara,
That formless and attributeless Self,
He indeed am I — there is no doubt about this.

17. Only he who does not know his true nature
Is the *jiva* that is subject to the *dharmas* (characteristics) of birth, death, and so on.
He who knows his true Self is one who is eternal,
He is the pure, He is Siva. Without doubt, know this.

18. Hence, what men of discrimination should enquire carefully
And directly realise is the Self;
That itself shines twofold,
As the transcendental and the inferior divisions, the gross and the subtle.

19. The Supreme *nirvana* is the higher,
The inferior is manifest as the creation,
Mantras are spoken of as its gross form,
What abides in changeless awareness is the subtle.

20. Shanmukha! Without realising It (*Atma*),
What avails explanations thereof in endless ways? Tell me!
All these are only a wonderful display of words,
The cause for the delusion of the mind.

21. All the *dharmas* (qualities) abide in the Self.
Whichever of them the *jiva* imagines,
Whereby he concentrates his thoughts again and again on it,
He will attain that object — there is no doubt of this.

22. Thus has been told by me as the knowledge of the Self
What has been gathered succinctly in a condensed form.
All, by any means, is of the nature of the Self.
Realising this, may you ever be strengthened in the thoughts of the Self.

23. The deities, the Vedas, the fire sacrifices,
The various gifts to priests in the course of their performance —
None of this exists there (in the nature of the Self).
Be tuned to the blemishless, omni-faceted, steadfast knowledge of the Self.

24. To the *jiva* drowning in the vast ocean of the birth-death cycle,
And seeking a refuge,
What affords refuge is only that knowledge of the Self,
Not anything else — know this.

25. He who becomes of the nature of the Supreme
And realises it as it really is,
Shall, though experiencing all changing states,
Attain liberation without effort — be aware of this.

26. There is no greater blessing anywhere,
Apart from the gaining of the Self.
Meditate ever on the Self. He, who is the Self,
He indeed is the one all-pervasive Supreme Self — be aware of this.

27. It is not the *prana* (the vital air that circulates) nor the *apana* (the air that travels down) even,
Nor the instruments superior even to these, the senses, mind and such.
Reach ever for the thought of the Self.
That is the omniscient and the perfect.

28. It is neither inside nor outside,
Not afar, nor nearby, nor does it fit in any place.
That Supreme is formless, all pervasive and effulgent,
Direct your thoughts ever to it.

29. It is across, above, and below,
Inside and outside, which are divisions, ever established firmly everywhere —
The void, the self-luminous Self.
Ever meditate on that more and more.

30. Not a void, not a non-void,
It is also the non-void, and the void,
Pervasive everywhere, but without predilections —
Ever think of this Self.

31. Afflictionless, and without any support for itself,
Bereft of caste, name, and form —
That taintless, attributeless Self
You should unceasingly meditate upon.

32. With no refuge, with nothing to support it,
Beyond the range of comprehension, without parallel,
Faultless by nature, the eternal — the
Self that is so, meditate upon it joyfully, forever.

33. Embracing dispassion and thus desisting from all *karmic* activity,
Shying away from society,
One should, thereafter, ever meditate upon
The Self within oneself, in oneself, by oneself — be aware of this.

34. Country and lineage, the traditional castes and style of life,
Effacing various thoughts arising in the wake of these,
The wise man should meditate daily,
Upon his (real) nature.

35. ‘This is the mantra’, ‘this is the deity’,
‘This is indeed what is called meditation’,
‘This indeed is *tapas*’—
Casting afar all such thoughts,
Concentrate on the nature of your own Self.

36. The Self is without thought.
Make it impossible for the thought-oriented (mind) to think at all.
Make the mind that thinks, to get settled on the Self.
Let not the mind think of anything else.

37. The Self is not something that can be thought of nor is it something that cannot be thought of.
It is not thought itself,
It is indeed itself thought —
What does not lean towards any of the above,
The Supreme that is the Self, ever meditate upon it.

38. Meditate ever on that
Which is beyond the reach of the mind,
Allowing no refuge for the mind.
The joy that is attained in abundance in that Self,
That is beyond all verities and complete.

39. Without any differences, and beyond the reach of thinking,
Without any precedent, without anything similar,
That which is the utmost frontier and extolled as the supreme bliss,
Be immersed in it.

40. Discarding all desire for objects,
Destroying the modes of the mind,

The non-dual state of being the One,
When the mind ceases to be,
Is the one called supreme bliss.

41. All directions, all places, all times
Are conducive for the yoga of the Self, so say the scriptures.
Differences of castes and orders of life and such,
Cannot cause any differences in the least to the nature of knowledge.

42. The colour of milk is one, the colours of the cows many,
So is the nature of knowledge, observe the wise ones.
Beings of various marks and attributes,
Are like the cows, their realisation is the same;
This is an example we should know.

43. Brahman intimately pervades all,
It shines with faces in all directions.
Established in it without a pause,
Think not of differences such as regions and
directions.

44. In this world itself, there is no mark, lifestyle, or tradition,
For the one who becomes of the nature of the Self.
He has nothing to gain by any action of his; no action need he perform,
Nor any injunctions prescribing actions apply to him — know this.

45. Moving or standing or sleeping,
Waking or taking food or water,
In the face of the wind, the cold and the sun,
Unaffected will he be, in any state, at any time.

46. Fear, indigence, sickness, burning fever, indigestion —
Even when all these affect,
One established in the Self,
Peaceful and shining full,
He is never at his wit’s end on any count; he will savour the satisfaction of the Self.

47. Whether going forward or returning, I am not the one that moves
Forward or back. When enquired into there is no going or coming.
In the ever changing dharma of *Prakrti*, the cause of illusive creation,
I never was immersed, nor am I now.

48. All activities prescribed are the work of *Prakrti*, the illusion.
Prakrti, so spoken of, is the source of all action.
‘I am the immaculate’, ‘I am the actionless’, thus
indeed will reflect
The wise man, the knower of truth.

49. For him there is no bondage of *Prakrti*, the delusion.
He has earned the name of the liberated one.
He shall never be touched by the defects
Spoken of as the action of *Prakrti*.

50. The manner in which a lamp shines,
Destroying darkness with its light — in like manner,
By destroying the enveloping darkness, arising from inexplicable ignorance,
The Self, of the nature of the pure light of knowledge, shines.

51. Even as the lamp, with the fuel of ghee spent, attains *nirvana* (peace),
The *yogi*, continuously contemplating on the Truth of the Self,
Will be at peace in the Self.
Nothing greater is there to be attained than the Self — this is the truth.

52. When the pot is carried, the space within the pot,
Though conceived of as carried,
Is it not the pot only that is carried?
The Self too, like Space, remains motionless.

53. When the pot breaks, the space in the pot
Merges one with the great Space.
When the inert body passes away, the Self, seemingly in the body,
Becomes immediately one with the Supreme Self.

54. Thus, the Lord who is omniscient
Spoke with authority then:
'One who is liberated, severed from all bondage,
Becomes all pervasive, endless,
With absolute Awareness'.

55. Discarding totally all the *agamas*,
Attaining the pure *samadhi* of *Atma yoga*,
Realising, by due enquiry, there is nothing else greater than this,
Destroy all wrong ideas, in the mind, of differences.

56. Meditating continuously on the great Knowledge thus,
That *yogi* who attains ever the bodiless nature,
That pure *jnani* whose *dharma* is the *dharma* of That (bodiless nature) alone,

Is the liberated one, shining inside and out, reaching
across to every place.

57. Omniscience and bliss, and mature wisdom,
Remaining independent, limitless strength —
Attaining all these, he shines ever, the Self without
afflictions.
With an immaculate body, he, as the Self, merges in
Siva.

58. *Japa* of the name, worship, bathing in holy waters,
ritual sacrifices,
None of these or others are needed.
The fruits of *dharma* and *adharma*,
Water oblations to forefathers,
None of these are for him.

59. No injunctions for observance, no fasts,
Nothing required by way of getting into or out of
(any action),
No vows of celibacy for him, know this.

60. Not having any recourse to falling into the fire or water,
Or falling from the mountain top,
Enjoy the feast of the Knowledge of Siva, eternal and
pure.
Rid of the rules applying to all creation, move about
as you please.

61. I tell you this is the Truth, the Truth, the Truth, thrice
over.
There is nothing greater than this,
Nothing greater is there to be known,
Nothing at all, nowhere ever.

62. Rid of any blemish, rid of ignorance, with pure
intellect, being the pure Self,
By the pure conviction that all that is seen is pure,
Meditating on the immaculate nature,
He shall attain Awareness.

(Translated by Dr. H. Ramamurthy)

Devikalottara

(Introduction by Sri Bhagavan)

This work is one of the *upa-agamas* and explains the supreme wisdom to be attained by mature souls and their mode of life, expounded by the Supreme Lord Siva to Devi Parvati. It is the essence of all *Agama Sastras* on matters of spiritual knowledge. This is verily the boat which can rescue the mortals struggling hard, sinking and rising, in the sorrowful ocean of *samsara* of endless cycles of births and deaths and take them by the direct path to the shore of liberation. Let all earnest seekers after Truth, instead of groping in the dark, bewildered, and losing their way, adopt the help of this straight path and reach the supreme state to bliss and peace.

Invocation

Meditate in the Heart upon Lord Ganesa — the silent, non-dual, universal witness — who is the nectar of divine bliss and is full of grace, shining as the bountiful flowering of aspirants following the path of spiritual wisdom revealed in *Devikalottara*, which was expounded by Lord Ishwara into the ears of Goddess Ishwari.

Note: In the original Tamil verse, the word 'kari' means 'elephant', which denotes Lord Ganesa as per tradition, but the word 'kari' also means 'witness', which denotes the Universal Self, which is in line with Advaitic experience.

The Text

Devi :

1. O Lord of all celestial beings! I yearn to know that path of supreme wisdom and the code of conduct by adopting which one can get liberation, so that all humanity may attain salvation. I request you to enlighten me on them, out of your grace.

Ishwara :

2. O Queen among women! So that everyone may attain knowledge, I shall clearly explain to you today the highest knowledge and the discipline to be followed by which discerning seekers will attain liberation, which is free from any blemish and is difficult to describe.

3. O Lady with fair countenance! Understand that one who is not able to realise the Truth in his Heart by this knowledge of spiritual wisdom known as *Kala Jnana*, can never attain it even by studying countless crores of *sastras* (scriptures) spread out like the sky.

4. Therefore cast aside all fears (on following this path) and shed all doubts. Giving up attachment or desire for anything, be ardent in seeking the ultimate knowledge with wholehearted devotion and with a clear mind (without any trace of confusion).

5. Claiming nothing as 'mine', filled with compassion, giving protection to all living beings so that no creature fears you, yearning for liberation, absorbed in yoga (union of *jiva* and *Para*, fusion of individual self with the universal Self), study this work *Devikalottara* and follow wholeheartedly and steadfastly the single path shown therein.

6-7. If one is to describe the person who can bring under control his mind, which is restless and turbulent like a

whirlwind, and maintain it in a tranquil state, he is verily Brahma (the God that does the creation), Siva (the saviour who shows the path to salvation) and Vishnu (the sustainer of the world); he is Indra, King of the *devas*, and Lord Subrahmanya (chief commander of all the celestial forces); he is Brihaspati, the guru of all *devas;* he is a supreme *yogi*, and one who has achieved the result of performing all austerities; he is a great scholar (who has mastered all the Vedas and *sastras*), and an outstanding man; he is one who has achieved the true spiritual goal.

8-9. The means by which this mind, which is restless and moves about quicker than the wind, can be brought under control, is indeed the means to obtain liberation; it indeed is what is good for those who seek the permanent Reality; it itself is Pure Consciousness and the state of firmness; moreover, it alone is the righteous duty to be followed by discerning aspirants; it alone is the pilgrimage to holy waters; it alone is charity; it alone is austerities. Know that there is no doubt about this.

10. When the mind moves even a little, that is *samsara* (worldly bondage); when the mind abides firmly and motionlessly (in the state of Self), that is *mukti* (liberation). This is certain. Therefore know that the wise man must hold his mind firm by supreme Self-awareness.

11. The happiness attained in this aloneness is the highest, boundless bliss. Which learned persons will not revel in that Supreme Reality, in which there is absolutely no action? Tell me.

12. Being rid of the worldly knowledge, the great hero who has acquired pure wisdom, in which there are no sense objects, and which is all pervading and without any form,

will attain immutable *moksha* without fail, even though he may have no desire to attain liberation.

13. The consciousness *(chaitanya)* associated with the aspect 'am' is called *Sakti*. The universe shines by its light. The entire creation is *Sakti's sankalpa* (thought). The state (of mind) which is completely devoid of all attachment is the pure (wisdom) to be attained.

14. The void which is the infinite and all-encompassing one whole without a second, which is just the effulgence of pure wisdom, which is completely devoid of visible phenomena and which consists of the aspect 'I' is the seed which fructifies as liberation, bestowing salvation by enabling one to unite with the Supreme.

15. Instead of following this direct path, do not ever contemplate even in the least upon *chakras* (located in six *adharas*, centres in the body), *nadis* (subtle nerves that produce the ten divine sounds such as *Pranava*), the deities associated with the lotus seats (in the *adhara chakras*, beginning with Vinayaka), the *mantraksharas* (potent sound syllables for the worship of these deities) and the diverse *mandala murtis* (the God-aspects, starting from those controlling the sun, *Surya Mandala*, the moon, *Chandra Mandala*, and fire, *Agni mandala*).

Note: Some aspirants indulge in severe austerities and arduous practices, mastering several techniques and incidentally attaining extraordinary supernatural powers as well. All these are to be shunned as they do not lead to ultimate peace and joy. On the other hand, the path of Kala Jnana *described here is a direct path to* mukti.

16. Those who seek everlasting liberation need not endeavour to practise repetition and countless verse *mantras*

(repeating potent scriptural words or texts to gain various ends), and methods of yoga such as breath-control *(pranayama),* breath retention (*kumbhaka)* and concentration.

17. There is no room for performing *puja* (worship of deities), *namaskaram* (paying homage like prostration), *japa* (incantation), *dhyana* (contemplation) and so on. Hear from me that the highest truth acclaimed in the Vedas can be known only through *jnana;* hence, there is absolutely no need to know anything outside of oneself.

18. For those whose minds are constantly expanding, clinging to external objects, factors will always arise causing increasing bondage. If the outward-wandering mind is turned inwards to stay in its natural state, know that one will not undergo any suffering in the world.

19. Unite with that one totality, which is all-pervasive, which has no inside or outside, which is bereft of all (concept of) directions such as above, below and in between, which assumes all the forms in creation and yet is itself formless, which can be known only by itself, and which is self-luminous.

20. People perform their actions having their own aims in mind, and they accordingly reap the consequences of their actions by attaining those aims. Therefore do not engage in such actions which are not free from flaws (leading to bondage). Turn the attention completely away from external objects and concentrate only upon that (the Self) which cannot be seen.

21. In our natural state, actions, cause and result of such actions, and all the various other theories propounded (in the scriptures) do not exist. In fact, even the diverse world does not exist. As such even the worldly individual who is attached to (the various attractions of) the world is also nonexistent.

22. This entire universe is nothing but the *niralamba* (the reality which exists without any support). Further, it shines being illumined by the *niralamba.* The *yogi* (with his mind turned inward) merges with this whole one by making every object in this world one with it. Know this.

23. If any person does not meditate on this great all-pervading void, which is the space of consciousness (*chidakasa*), he will be a *samsari* (a worldly individual) forever in bondage to worldly attachments, like the silkworm in its self made cocoon. Understand this.

24. All living beings, of whatever genus, undergo great misery over and over again. Hear from me. In order to avert all this suffering and sorrow, meditate on the great void constantly without any break.

25. Good actions and good conduct have been prescribed only to guide the seeker towards the path of acquiring knowledge. Therefore, giving up even *salamba yoga*[1] in which an object (such as a *mantra* or a form of God) is meditated upon in the mind, stay steadfast in your real state (*sahaja swarupa*), where the outside world is not perceived.

Note: Actions prescribed include worship of Siva in one's mind as well as outside. The various ceremonies prescribed in Agama Sastras *for worshipping Siva in* saguna *form in a temple are covered in good conduct.*

26. One who can destroy all the *tattvas* (principles) from *patalaloka* (the nethermost world) to *Sakti* (one of the highest *tattvas),* which are all interdependent, by the arrow of *sunyabhava* is a man of great valour. He has attained supreme wisdom which is beyond matter.

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[1] *Salamba yoga* literally means *yoga* with support (*alamba*), that is any spiritual practice in which the mind clings to some object as a support. See also verses 35, 38, 40, 41.

Note: ln sunyabhava *the individual is only aware of his conscious being while everything else is like a void* (sunya) — *without existence.*

27. The mind, hankering after things of the world, is more restless than a monkey. If one controls it from wandering after external things and holds it in the void of non-matter one will attain liberation directly.

28. The full Consciousness (*purna chit*) which is not other than the true import of the word ‘I’, being non-different in all the principles *(tattvas)* and being other than the sense ‘I am the body’, is the all-pervading Reality.

29. This complete wholeness pervades inside and outside all creations like ether, merging with them, and is itself formless. Dear, those who are submerged in this supreme bliss become that supreme bliss themselves. See, how wonderful!

30. The expanding mind will attain peace, becoming still of its own accord, if it is deprived of something to hold on, just as fire gets extinguished gradually if not fed with fuel.

31. You must realise that the four states of infatuation, delusion, swoon (due to shock) and dreaming, as also sleeping and waking, are all to be dispelled.

32. If one meditates that the one Consciousness (*chit*) is different from the *prana* (life-force), which has subtly attached itself to this gross body, from the mind, from the intellect and from the ego, one will become established in that Consciousness.

33. Due to sleep and due to thoughts the mind always loses its sharpness, its foolishness increases, and it goes to ruin. Awakening this mind with effort, and without allowing it to wander, establish it in the state of Self. Persevere in this effort by fixing the mind again and again in its natural state.

34. When once the mind becomes steady, it should not be disturbed in any way. There is no need to think even in the least of anything else, entertaining any doubts. Fixing the mind firmly in that state (of Self-awareness), keep it still.

35. Make the mind, which always clings to some support (attaching itself to sense-objects), devoid of all such supports. Making the mind, which is restless in clinging to external supports, motionless, do not disturb that tranquillity even a little.

36. Meditate on the peerless Self which pervades all the various forms, yet remains without any blemish (being unaffected by them), just as ether, pervading all the creations made up of the five elements, remains unsullied at the time of their dissolution.

37. When one adopts the practice (*sadhana*) by means of which one's mind, which is restless like the wind, is made still perpetually, then the purpose of taking birth as a human being is fulfilled. That is also the mark of a true scholar.

38. Do not practise meditation by fixing the mind on the six *adhara chakras*, the ones that are up or down or in the middle, or anywhere else. Giving up all such meditations, make the mind always devoid of any support (either inside or outside).

39. If the mind falls asleep, awaken it. Then if it starts wandering, make it quiet. If you reach the state where there is neither sleep nor movement of mind, stay still in that, the natural (real) state.

40. The state in which the mind is bereft of any support to cling to, ever faultless and pure, and devoid of worldly attachments, is the nature of liberation attained through knowledge. Keep this firmly in mind.

41. Dispelling all attachments completely, and fixing that mind in the Heart firmly, persist in your practice always in order to strengthen the awareness, which then shines forth with great effulgence and clarity.

42. Know that whoever meditates on that supreme void, and becomes established in it by virtue of constant practice, will definitely attain the great state which is beyond birth and death.

43. Gods and goddesses, merits, demerits and their fruits, which are likewise *anya* (other than oneself), objects of attachment and the knowledge of those objects — all these will lead one to bondage in mighty *samsara*.

44. All objects of attachments are said to be pairs of opposites (happiness and misery, good and bad, profit and loss, victory and defeat, and so on). When one rises above those pairs of opposites, one realises the Supreme. Such a *yogi* is a *jivanmukta*, liberated from bondage. On discarding the body, he becomes a *videhamukta*.

45. A wise man should not give up the body out of aversion to it. Know that when once the *prarabdha karma* (result of accumulated actions) which was responsible for the creation of the body ceases, the bodily burden will automatically fall off.

46. The Consciousness which shines as 'I' in the Heart-lotus is pure (flawless) and perfectly steady (without a trace of movement). By destroying the ego, which rises (from that Consciousness), that Consciousness itself bestows the supreme joy of liberation. Be sure about it.

47. With great devotion meditating constantly that 'I am that Siva the form of the one Consciousness that is always unsullied by any adjunct,' dispel all your attachments.

48. Giving up all notions about country, caste, blemishless community, *asrama* (status as a bachelor, family man, ascetic or one who has renounced the world) and associated matters, hold on to and practise always meditation upon the Self, your own natural state.

49. I alone am. No one belongs to me; nor do I belong to anyone else. I can see no one who can call me his; neither can I see anyone who is mine. I am all alone.

50. Know that the person who experiences the firm conviction, 'I am the Supreme *Brahman*, I am the Master and Lord of the Universe!' is the real *mukta* (one who has attained liberation), and that the one following conflicting paths is in bondage.

51. The day one is able to see oneself with his inner eye as not the body, all his desires vanish, and he experiences perfect peace.

52. He who is described in the scriptures as the unborn and Lord, I am He, the *Atman* (Self), who is forever without form or qualities. There is absolutely no doubt about it.

53. I am pure Awareness, immaculate, perfectly liberated; and forever present everywhere. I am indeterminable. No one can grasp me or leave me. I am free from sorrow. I am always *brahmamayam* (of the nature of *Brahman*).

54. I am the Self which is Consciousness, absolute completeness, deathless and self-established, and which is other than this insentient body, limited between the top of the head and the sole of the foot, and which, beginning with the *antahkaranas* (the inner instruments such as mind and intellect) is bounded by the covering of the skin.

55. Thinking, 'I am the Lord of all creations, moving or stationary, I remain as father, mother and father's father for

the universe', aspirants for *mukti* contemplate with concentration and ardour only upon Me, who am that great *turiya* state (the substratum of the waking, dream and sleep states).

56. I am the one who is worshipped through sacrifices and penances by all celestial beings beginning with Brahma (the Creator), the heavenly damsels who are themselves sought after, humans, *yakshas*, *gandharvas*, *nagas* and other groups of superhuman beings, and also by many others. Know that everyone worships only Me.

57. By many kinds of rare austerities and charities, everyone worships only Me. Know that this vast creation, moving and stationary, and all objects, are nothing but Me, the Infinite One.

58. I am not the gross body, nor am I the subtle body. I am also not the causal body. I am the kinsman of the universe. I am the One who is of the nature of transcendental knowledge. I am moreover the eternal One, the Lord, the taintless One, the One who is devoid of the states (of waking, dream and sleep), the One who is devoid of the universe.

59. The beginningless Consciousness is unborn, whole and, residing forever in its natural home of the Heart-cave, is without form, world or impurity. It is beyond comparison and completely unattached. It cannot be comprehended by the mind nor can it be seen or felt by the senses.

60. Repeatedly see thus: 'I am He, the eternal, omnipresent Reality which is *Brahman*'. Meditating thus for a long time, whoever abides imperturbably will become the Supreme *Brahman*, thereby attaining immortality.

61. Having thus explained the nature of knowledge to enable everyone to attain liberation, which is always available,

I shall now proceed to describe the conduct to be adopted by seekers. Noble Lady, listen to them calmly.

62. O Queen among women! Know that bathing in holy waters, repeating holy names or words (*mantras*), performing daily *homa* (sacred offering in specially prepared fire), worship, other oblations in lustrous fire, or any other means (*sadhana*) to be followed after great study, are never required for him (the earnest aspirant seeking liberation).

63. *Niyamas* (strict rules of conduct such as what to eat, when to eat, how to eat, what to wear, where to sit and so on), worship of deities in sacred places, *nama archanas* (worship of deities by reciting sacred names), *pitru karmas* (oblations, etc., carried out for the sake of forefathers to help them reach a high state), pilgrimage to holy places which have come forth on earth, and observance of great vows, are all not for him (the earnest aspirant), if considered deeply.

64. He does not reap the fruit of actions, good or bad. Important dates and special observances zealously followed by the world are not for him. Give up all actions and all kinds of worldly codes of conduct.

65. Renounce completely all religious edicts and disciplines. Since all kinds of action result in bondage, give up all action plans, mental conflicts, and attachment to one's caste duties.

66. Even if the aspirant acquires many kinds of supernatural powers and magical powers such as visualising what is buried underneath the earth, and can demonstrate them before the world, he should give up mental attachment to them.

67. All these (powers) are only bondages to the individual soul. Further they drag one to follow a low path. The supreme

joy of liberation does not lie in any of them, but only in the Infinite Consciousness.

68. One must engage unfailingly in yoga (the practice of Self-abidance) in all conditions, without allowing any special event to affect one adversely. If, due to doubts, delusion arises in the form of attraction to worship in holy places and temples (on account of past practices and *vasanas*), reject it immediately.

69. Listen to me, Lady! Know that only the wise man who never does anything which leads to the destruction of any form of life, such as insects, worms, birds or plants, is a person who is seeking true knowledge.

70. He (the true aspirant) should not pull out tender roots (of fragrant plants, which is often done for worship); he should not even pluck the leaves; he should not harm any living thing out of anger; he should not heartlessly pluck even flowers.

71-72. He should worship Lord Siva using only flowers that have fallen naturally. He should not indulge in vile practices such as *marana* (causing destruction through the use of certain *mantras*) *uchadana* (driving one out with the force of *mantras), vidveshana* (causing mutual hatred between friends), the well known *sthambana* (freezing one's capabilities), causing fever, putting into action evil spirits, causing agitation, wrongly taking control of others, attracting and infatuating others, and so on. Abandon the worship of stones, wooden objects and similar articles.

73. Having relinquished the great *mudras* which are adopted in order to fix the mind on the *devatas* (deities) residing in holy places and temples, and the associated sacrifices, get rid of the *vasanas* also which may have

accumulated on account of such practices in the past, and cling only to the Self, the all-pervading real Consciousness.

74. Maintain a neutral attitude towards all things; do not get infatuated with anything; maintain equanimity whether in happiness or suffering; be the same to friends and enemies; treat alike a broken piece of mud pot and a piece of gold.

75. Know that a flawless *yogi* is one who does not ever allow himself to be swayed by desire for the pleasures of the senses, who frees himself at heart from *mamakara* (treating things as 'mine'), who has a steadfast mind, who is free from desires and fear, and who always revels in the Self.

76. Being unaffected by either praise or slander, treating alike all creatures, he should always unfailingly maintain an equality of vision *(sama drishti),* considering all living beings in the world as himself.

77. Avoid unnecessary arguments and worldly associations. Do not create misunderstanding among others. Do not join religious bodies well versed in many scriptures (*sastras*). Give up both words of abuse and words of praise.

78. Gradually and completely get rid of jealousy, slander, pomp, passion, consequent hatred, desire, anger, fear and sorrow.

79. If a man is free from all the pairs of opposites and always lives in Solitude (established in himself alone), he gains perfect wisdom even while in the present body and shines forth with great effulgence.

80. Liberation is attained only by knowledge (*jnana*). By other powers (*siddhis*) such a fruit is unattainable. However, aspirants become enchanted with blemishful worldly

enjoyments and thaumaturgic powers (*siddhis*) and go after them with desire.

81. Know that the pure flawless person will experience that blemishless Lord (the Supreme *Brahman*) and positively attain liberation whether attended by the supernatural powers or not.

82. The body is a form constituted of the five elements (earth, water, fire, air and ether). The one all-pervading Siva is also nicely seated there. Hence the entire universe, right from the indivisible all-pervading *Sivam* (the highest and most abstract *tattva* or principle) to this world, is the form of Shankara.

83-84. My dearest, earnest seekers who see the enlightened one and worship him with all the three instruments (mind, speech and body) in unison, offering him with heart-melting love, sweet-smelling sandal paste, fruits, flowers, incense, good water to bathe, clothes and food, will thus attain liberation. Know that those who worship that *jnani* reap the fruit of his righteous deeds and those who slander him reap the result of his sins.

85. I have revealed the truth about knowledge and the conduct pertaining thereto, as you have asked. This entire path is indeed *Kalottara Jnana* (the knowledge to be revealed at the final stage of maturity). Tell me, O Lady, if you want to ask anything more.

(Translated by T. K. Jayaraman)

12

Translations from Shankaracharya

In the eighth century A.D., pure Vedantic *teaching, the doctrine of* advaita *or non-duality, which is the very essence of Hinduism, had shrunk to a low ebb and was restored to full vigour by the great spiritual master Sri Shankara, known also as Shankaracharya (meaning 'Shankara, the Teacher'). Ramana Maharshi, being a perfect* jnani, *that is one who is liberated from illusion and established in absolute knowledge, accepted Sri Shankara's teaching as his own. From time to time he translated one or another of his works, either spontaneously or on the request of some devotee who did not read Sanskrit and required a Tamil version.*

Dakshinamurti Stotra

(Introduction by Sri Bhagavan)

Brahma (the four-faced god) brought by his power of thought four sons, named Sanaka, Sanandana, Sanatsujata and Sanatkumara. He asked them to attend to the work of creating the world, preserving it, etc., but they were not interested in it, being completely detached. They wandered about in search of peace and tranquillity. As they were extremely dispassionate and fit (to receive spiritual instruction), Siva, the great God of compassion, manifested himself before them in human form as Dakshinamurti (god facing south) under a banyan tree. He sat silently absorbed in himself, his right hand showing the gesture known as *chinmudra*.[1] The four seekers were drawn to him even as iron is drawn to a magnet. They sat before him and, like him, were absorbed in the Self. Even advanced spiritual aspirants cannot easily understand this state of silence. The world, the seer and the awareness which enables it to be cognized stand as obstacles in their way. But since it is the single power (*Sakti*) which manifests itself as these three and again withdraws them into itself, everything is that power which is the Self. Shankaracharya has expounded this truth in the following hymn.

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[1] *Chinmudra*: literally, the gesture of Pure Consciousness, is indicated by making the thumb and the index finger touch each other and spreading out the remaining fingers. This gesture not only symbolises unity behind multiplicity but also the identity of the individual self and the supreme Self.

Shankaracharya's Hymn to Dakshinamurti

(Translated from Sri Bhagavan's Tamil rendering)

According to Hindu legends, Dakshinamurti (which means 'southward-facing') is God or Siva manifested as a youth who is the divine Guru and guides disciples older than himself through silent influence on their Heart. The name is also divided as Dakshina-amurti and taken to mean 'formless power'.

The Maharshi was Siva manifested, the divine Guru who taught through silence and was therefore identified with Dakshinamurti.

Invocation

That Shankara who appeared as Dakshinamurti to grant peace to the great ascetics (Sanaka, Sanandana, Sanatkumara and Sanatsujata), who revealed his real state of silence, and who has expressed the nature of the Self in this hymn, abides in me.

The Hymn

He who teaches through silence the nature of the Supreme *Brahman*, who is a youth, who is the most eminent Guru surrounded by the most competent disciples that remain steadfast in *Brahman*, who has the hand pose indicating illumination,[2] who is of the nature of bliss, who revels in himself, who has a benign countenance — that Father who has a south-facing form,[3] we adore.

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[2] There are many traditional *mudras* or postures of the hands which are used in Indian dancing and iconography, each of which has its own meaning.

[3] The supreme Guru is the spiritual north pole and therefore traditionally faces southwards.

To him who by *maya*, as by dream, sees within himself the universe which is inside him, like a city that appears in a mirror, (but) which is manifested as if externally to him who apprehends, at the time of awakening, his own single Self, to him, the primal Guru, Dakshinamurti, may this obeisance be!

To him who like a magician or even like a great *yogi* displays, by his own power, this universe which at the beginning is undifferentiated like the sprout in the seed, but which is made differentiated under the varied conditions of space, time, and karma and posited by *maya* to him, the Guru Dakshinamurti, may this obeisance be!

To him whose luminosity alone, which is of the nature of existence, shines forth, entering the objective world which is like the nonexistent; to him who instructs those who resort to him through the text 'That thou art'; to him by realizing whom there will be no more falling into the ocean of birth; to him who is the refuge of the ascetics, the Guru Dakshinamurti, may this obeisance be!

To him who is luminous like the light of a lamp set in a pot with many holes; to him whose knowledge moves outward through the eye and other sense organs; to him who is effulgent as 'I know', and the entire universe shines after him; to him, the unmoving Guru Dakshinamurti, may this obeisance be!

They who know the 'I' as body, breath, senses, intellect, or the void, are deluded like women and children, and the blind and the stupid, and talk much. To him who destroys the great delusion produced by ignorance; to him who removes the obstacles to knowledge, the Guru Dakshinamurti, may this obeisance be!

To him, who sleeps when the manifested mind gets resolved, on account of the veiling by *maya*, like the sun or the moon in eclipse, and on waking recognizes self-existence

in the form ‘I have slept till now’; to him the Guru of all that moves and moves not, Dakshinamurti, may this obeisance be!

To him who, by means of the hand-pose indicating illumination, manifests to his devotees his own Self that forever shines within as ‘I’, constantly, in all the inconstant states such as infancy, etc., and waking, etc. — to him whose eye is of the form of the fire of knowledge, the Guru Dakshinamurti, may this obeisance be!

To the self who, deluded by *maya*, sees, in dreaming and waking, the universe in its distinctions such as cause and effect, master and servant, disciple and teacher, and father and son, to him, the Guru of the world, Dakshinamurti, may this obeisance be!

To him whose eightfold form is all this moving and unmoving universe, appearing as earth, water, fire, air, ether, the sun, the moon, and soul; beyond whom, supreme and all-pervading, there exists naught else for those who enquire — to him the gracious Guru Dakshinamurti, may this obeisance be!

Since, in this hymn, the all-self-hood has thus been explained, by listening to it, by reflecting on its meaning, by meditating on it, and by reciting it, there will come about lordship together with the supreme splendour consisting in all-self-hood; thence will be achieved, again, the unimpeded supernormal power presenting itself in eight forms.

Guru Stuti

Introduction by Sri Bhagavan

When Shankaracharya was going about the country debating with the exponents of the various schools of thought and overcoming them, he once came to the town of Mahishmati in the north, where Mandana Mishra, the exponent of *Vedic* rituals lived. He overcame him in debate but his wife refused to concede victory until she was also defeated. So, Shankaracharya argued with her and defeated her in all subjects except erotica. He then asked for a respite of one month and after shedding his body in a cave under the custody of his disciples, entered into the dead body of king Amaruka and sported among the hundred queens in the guise of their husband. When the disciples found that the period specified by their Guru had already expired they grew anxious. So some of them went to him in the disguise of minstrels and sang the following hymn (to remind him).

Text

1. That is the Truth which the wise realize as the Self, the residuum left over on withdrawing from external objects, with or without form (ether, air, fire, water and earth), by a careful application of the scriptural text 'Not this, not this'. That thou art!

2. That is the Truth which, after generating the fundamentals (ether, air, fire, water and earth), and entering the world, lies hidden beneath the five sheaths, and which has been threshed out by the wise with the pestle of discernment, just as the grain is recovered by threshing and winnowing the chaff. That thou art!

3. Just as wild horses are broken-in by whipping and stabling them, so also the unruly senses, straying among objects, are lashed by the whip of discrimination, showing that objects are unreal, and are tethered by the rope of pure intellect to the Self by the wise. Such is the Truth. That thou art!

4. The Truth has been ascertained by the wise to be the substratum which is different from the waking, dream, and deep sleep states, its own expanded modes, which indeed are held together by it like the flowers strung together on a garland. That thou art!

5. That is the Truth which the scriptures show to be the primal cause of all, elucidating the point clearly by such texts as '*Purusha* is all this', 'like gold in ornaments of gold', etc. That thou art!

6. The Truth has been forcefully proclaimed by the scriptures in such texts as 'He who is in the sun, is in man.' 'He who shines in the sun, shines in the right eye,' etc., That thou art!

7. What pure *brahmins* seek so eagerly by repetition of the Vedas, by religious gifts, by earnest application of their hard-earned knowledge and by renunciation, is the Truth. That thou art!

8. That is the Truth which the valiant have got by seeking, with controlled mind, with abstinence, penance, etc., and

by diving into the Self by the self. Realizing it, they are considered to be heroes with their highest purpose accomplished. That is the transcendental *Satchidananda* (Being-Consciousness-Bliss) after gaining which there is nothing more to worry about since perfect peace reigns. That thou art!

On hearing these (verses) the Acharya bade them (his disciples) go away and promptly came out of the body of the King and re-entered his own. He then went to the lady (wife of Mandana Misra) and, after defeating her, made the two of them (she and her husband) his followers. Thereafter he went on his way enlightening the whole world.

Hastamalaka Stotra

Introduction by Sri Bhagavan

When Shankara, the Guru of the world, was travelling in the western parts of India and overcoming in debate the expounders of the various schools of thought, he once came to a village known as Srivali. When a *brahmin* inhabitant of the village named Prabhakara heard about his arrival he went to him with his thirteen year old son. He prostrated before Sankara and made his son also prostrate. He then explained that the boy had been dumb from his childhood, that he had no likes and dislikes, nor a sense of honour and dishonour, and that he was completely inactive. The Guru then raised the boy up and asked him as follows in a cheerful tone:

Text

1. 'Who are you? Whose child are you? Whither are you bound? What is your name? Whence have you come? Oh Child! I should like to hear your reply to these questions.' Thus spoke Sri Shankaracharya to the boy, and Hastamalaka replied as follows.

2. I am neither man, God, *yaksha, brahmin, kshatriya, vaisya*, *sudra*, *brahmachari,* householder, forest-dweller, nor *sannyasi;* but I am pure awareness alone.

3. Just as the sun causes all worldly movements, so do I — the ever-present, conscious Self — cause the mind to be

active and the senses to function. Again, just as the ether is all-pervading, yet devoid of any specific qualities, so am I free from all qualities.

4. I am the conscious Self, ever-present and associated with everything in the same manner as heat is always associated with fire. I am that eternal, undifferentiated, unshaken Consciousness, on account of which the insentient mind and senses function, each in its own manner.

5. I am that conscious Self of whom the ego is not independent as the image in a mirror is not independent of the object reflected.

6. I am the unqualified, conscious Self, existing even after the extinction of *buddhi*, just as the object remains ever the same even after the removal of the reflecting mirror.

7. I am eternal Consciousness, dissociated from the mind and senses. I am the mind of the mind, the eye of the eye, ear of the ear and so on. I am not cognizable by the mind and senses.

8. I am the eternal, single, conscious Self, reflected in various intellects, just as the sun is reflected on the surface of various sheets of water.

9. I am the single, conscious Self, illumining all intellects, just as the sun simultaneously illumines all eyes so that they perceive objects.

10. Only those eyes that are helped by the sun are capable of seeing objects, not others. The source from which the sun derives its power is myself.

11. Just as the reflection of the sun on agitated waters seems to break up, but remains perfect on a calm surface, so also am I, the conscious Self, unrecognizable in agitated intellects though I clearly shine in those which are calm.

12. Just as a fool thinks that the sun is entirely lost when it is hidden by dense clouds, so do people think that the ever-free Self is bound.

13. Just as the ether is all-pervading and unaffected by contact, so also does the ever-conscious Self pervade everything without being affected in anyway. I am that Self.

14. Just as a transparent crystal takes on the lines of its background, but is in no way changed thereby, and just as the unchanging moon on being reflected on undulating surfaces appears agitated, so is it with you, the all-pervading God.

15. As this *stotra* reveals the Self as clearly as the amalaka fruit placed on the palm of the hand (*hasta*), it received the name *Hastamalaka Strotra*. Moreover, the boy, eminent in *jnana*, came to be praised by all people of this world as Hastamalaka.

The father of the boy was speechless with wonder at those words. But the Acharya said to him: ‘He has become your son because of his incomplete austerities. This is your good fortune. He will not be of any use to you in this world. Let him stay with me.’ He bade him go back and, taking the boy with him, proceeded on his way. The disciples then asked him: ‘How did this boy attain the state of *Brahman* without hearing, etc.?’ The Guru replied: ‘His mother left her two year old child in the care of a great and highly accomplished *yogi* who was practising austerities on the bank of the Yamuna while she went to bathe in the river with some women. The child toddled towards the water and was drowned. Out of his compassion for the disconsolate mother the *sadhu* forsook his body and entered that of the child. That is why this boy has attained this high state.’

Atma Bodha

(Knowledge of the Self)

After a devotee sent to Sri Bhagavan a Tamil translation of Shankaracharya's Atma Bodha, *Bhagavan composed a new translation in Tamil. He did this translation very rapidly, working even at night, using a flashlight!*

'Can Shankara, the enlightener of the Self, be different from one's own Self? Who but he, does this day, abiding as the inmost Self in me, speak this in the Tamil language?'

— Sri Bhagavan

1. This — A*tma Bodha* — is meant to fulfil the want of the seekers of liberation who, by their prolonged *tapas*, have already cleansed themselves of impurities and become mentally peaceful and free from desires.

2. Of all the means to liberation, knowledge is the only direct one — as essential as fire to cooking; without it, liberation cannot be gained.

3. Not being opposed to ignorance, *karma* does not destroy it. On the other hand, knowledge destroys ignorance as surely as light does darkness.

4. Owing to ignorance, the Self now appears to be covered up; on the removal of ignorance, the pure Self will shine forth of Itself, like the sun after the dispersal of clouds.

5. The *jiva* is mixed up with ignorance. By constant practice of knowledge the *jiva* becomes pure, because

knowledge disappears (along with ignorance), as the cleansing nut with the impurities in the water.

But here is the world, how can the Self alone be real and non-dual?

6. *Samsara* is full of likes and dislikes and other opposites. Like a dream, it seems real for the time being; but, on waking, it vanishes because it is unreal.

Because the dream is negated on waking, I know it to be unreal; but the world persists and I find it only real.

7. So long as the substratum of all, the non-dual *Brahman* is not seen, the world seems real — like illusory silver in a piece of mother-of-pearl.

But the world is so diverse; yet, you say there is One only.

8. Like bubbles rising on the surface of the waters of the ocean, all the worlds arise from, stay in and resolve into the Supreme Being *(Paramesa)* who is the root cause and prop of all.

9. In the Being-Consciousness-Bliss, which is all permeating, eternal Vishnu, all these diverse objects and individuals appear (as phenomena) like various ornaments made of gold.

Yes, but what about the numberless individual souls?

10. Just as the all-pervading *akasa* (ether) appears fragmented in different objects (as in a pit, a jar, a house, a theatre hall, etc.) but remains undifferentiated on the limitations falling away, similarly with the single, non-dual ruler of the senses (seeming to function as gods, men, cattle, etc.).

But the individuals have different traits and function according to different conditions.

11. The traits, etc., are also superimposed. Pure water (tasteless by itself) tastes sweet, bitter, salty etc., according to the admixture in it *(upadhis)*. Similarly, race, name status, etc., are all superimposed on the non-dual Self of all. What are these *upadhis* which play such tricks on the Self? They are gross, subtle and very subtle as described here.

12. The gross body made up of the five gross elements (earth, water, fire, air and ether) is meant to reap the fruits of past actions in the shape of pleasure and pain.

13. The subtle body consisting of the five airs, the mind, intellect, the ten senses and made up of subtle elements is also meant for enjoyment (as in dreams).

14. Inexpressible and beginningless ignorance is said to be the causal body (as in deep sleep). Know the Self to be other than these three *upadhis*.

If so, why is the Self not evident to me? On the other hand, Sruti *says, 'This* Purusha *is made up of* annarasa *(essence of food).'*

15. Just as a clear crystal (itself colourless) appears red, blue, yellow, etc., according to the background, so also the Self, pure and untainted, seems to be identical with the body, the senses, the mind, intellect or blissful ignorance *(panchakosas)* when in contact with them.

16. Just as husking the paddy exposes the grain within (the rice), so also should one judiciously separate the pure *Atman* from the sheaths covering it.

Atman *is said to be everywhere. Why should it then be judiciously looked for within the five sheaths?*

17. Though always and everywhere present, the Self does not shine forth in all places. Just as light is reflected only in a

transparent medium, so also the Self is clearly seen in the intellect only.

18. The Self is realized in the intellect as the witness of the activities of, and yet separate from the body, the senses, the mind, intellect and gross nature (*prakriti*) as is a king in relation to his subjects.

The Self seems to participate in their activities; so he cannot be different from them, nor be their witness.

19. Just as the moon seems to move when the clouds around her move, so also the Self seems to the indiscriminating to be active, when actually, the senses are active.

To be active, the body etc., must also be intelligent; they are said to be inert. How can they act without the intelligent Self participating in their actions?

20. Just as men do their duties in the light of the sun (but the sun does not participate in them), so also the body, senses, etc., function in the light of the Self without its participating in them.

True, the Self alone is intelligence. I know myself to be born, growing, decaying, happy, or unhappy and so on. Am I right?

21. No. The characteristics (birth, death, etc.) of the body and the senses are superimposed on the Being-Consciousness-Bliss as is the blue in the sky by those who do not discriminate.

22. So also the characteristics of the mind, such as agency, etc., are by ignorance superimposed on the *Atman*, as are the movements of water on the moon reflected in it.

23. Only when the intellect is manifested, likes and dislikes, pleasure and pain are felt. In deep sleep, the intellect remaining latent, they are not felt. Therefore, they are of the intellect and not of the *Atman* (the Self). Here is the real nature of the *Atman*.

24. As light is the very sun, coldness the water, heat the fire, so also the eternal, pure Being-Consciousness-Bliss is the very Self.

At some time or other, every individual experiences, 'I am happy', and thus Being-Consciousness-Bliss experience is plain. How can one make the experience permanent and unchanging?

25. Being-Consciousness is of the Self; the 'I' mode or modification is of the intellect; these are distinctly two. However, owing to ignorance, the individual mixes them together and thinks 'I know' and acts accordingly.

26. Never is there any change (or action) in *Atman* nor knowledge in the intellect. Only the *jiva* is deluded into thinking itself to be the knower, doer and seer.

27. Like the snake in the rope, mistaking the *jiva* for the Self, one is subject to fear. If, on the other hand, one knows oneself not as a *jiva* but as the supreme Self, one is altogether free from fear.

28. Only the Self illumines the senses, intellect, etc., as a lamp does objects such as pots. The Self is not illumined by them as they are inert.

If the Self cannot be made known by the intellect, there will be no knower to know the Self and the Self cannot be known.

29. To see a light, no other light is needed. So also, the Self being self-effulgent, needs no other means of knowledge. It shines of itself.

If so, every one must be Self-realized, effortlessly, but it is not so.

30. On the strength of the *Vedic* teaching, 'Not this, not this', eliminate all the adjuncts *(upadhis)* and with the help of

the *mahavakyas*, realize the identity of the *jivatman* (individual self) with the *paramatman* (the supreme Self).

31. The whole objective world such as the body, is born of ignorance and transient like a bubble on water. Know the Self to be distinct from it and identical with *Brahman* (the Supreme).

32. Being distinct from the gross body, birth, death, old age, debility, etc., do not pertain to me. Not being the senses, I have no connection with the objects of the senses such as sound, etc.

33. The *srutis* declare: 'I am not the vital air (*prana*), not the mind, (but) pure (Being).' Not being the mind I am free from likes and dislikes, fear, etc.

34. 'I am free from qualities and actionless, eternal, undifferentiated, untainted, unchanging, formless, ever free and pure.

35. 'Like ether, I am always pervading all, in and out, unswerving, ever equal in all, pure, untainted, clear and unshaken.

36. 'That which remains eternal, pure, ever-free, all alone, unbroken bliss, non-dual, Being-Consciousness-Bliss, transcendent *Brahman* (the same) am I'.

37. Long, constant practice of 'I am *Brahman* only' destroys all *vasanas* (latent tendencies), born of ignorance as an efficacious remedy (*rasayana*) eradicates a disease.

38. Be dispassionate, keep the senses under control and let the mind not wander; sit in a solitary place and meditate on the Self as infinite and one alone.

39. Keep the mind pure; with keen intellect, resolve all that is objective into the Self and always meditate on the Self as clear and single like ether.

40. Having discarded all names and forms, you are now the knower of the Supreme Being and will remain as perfect Consciousness-Bliss.

41. Being the same as Consciousness-Bliss, there is no longer any differentiation such as the knower and the known; and the Self shines forth as Itself.

42. If in this manner by process of constant meditation, the two pieces of wood, namely the Self and the ego are rubbed together, the flames from the fire of knowledge burn away the whole range of ignorance.

43. On knowledge destroying ignorance in this way, like the light of dawn scattering the darkness of night, the Self will rise like the sun in all its glory.

44. True, the Self is always here and now; yet it is not apparent, owing to ignorance. On ignorance being destroyed the Self seems as if it were gained, like the necklace on one's own neck.[1]

45. Just as in darkness a post is mistaken for a man, so is *Brahman* in ignorance mistaken for a *jiva*. If, however, the true nature of a *jiva* is seen, delusion vanishes.

46. Knowledge arising on the experience of reality immediately destroys the ignorant perception of 'I' and 'mine', which resemble the delusion of direction in darkness.

47. A *jnani* who is a perfectly Self-realized *yogi*, sees by the eye of wisdom all objective phenomena to be in and of the Self and thus the Self to be the sole being.

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[1] The allusion is to the story of a lady wearing a precious necklace, who suddenly forgot where it was, grew anxious, looked for it everywhere and even asked others to help, until a kind friend pointed out that it was round the seeker's own neck.

How does he then act in the world?

48. Just as clay is the only material from which different utensils are formed (such as pots, jars, etc.), so he sees that the Self, too, is the whole universe and there is nothing but the Self.

49. In order to be liberated while yet alive, the sage should completely eschew the adjuncts *(upadhis)*, and thus gain the real nature of Being-Consciousness-Bliss, like the maggot that turns into a wasp.

50. Having crossed the ocean of illusion and having killed the demons of likes and dislikes, the *yogi*, now united to *shanti* (peace), finds delight in the Self and so remains in his own glory.

51. The *jivanmukta*, freed from all desire for transient, external pleasures, delights in his own Self and remains clear and steady a like lamp in a pot.

52. Like the *akasa* (ether) which remains untainted by the objects contained therein, the *muni* (sage) remains untainted by the adjuncts *(upadhis)* covering him. Being the all-knower he remains like one that knows not, and moves about like the air uncontaminated by the objects it touches.

53. On the dissolution of the adjuncts (the body, senses, etc.), the sage now freed from particularities merges in the all-permeating Being (Vishnu), like water in water, ether in ether or fire in fire.

54. There is no gain over and above this gain, no pleasure over and above this bliss, no knowledge over and above this knowledge, know this to be *Brahman*.

55. That on seeing which nothing remains to see, on becoming which there is no more return to *samsara*, on knowing which nothing remains to know, know that to be *Brahman*.

56. What fills everything, above, below and around, itself Being-Consciousness-Bliss, non-dual, infinite, eternal, one only, know that to be *Brahman*.

57. What remains as immutable, unbroken Bliss, and as one only, that which even the scriptures indirectly denote by the process of elimination as ‘not this, not this’, know the same to be *Brahman*.

58. Dependent on a fraction of the inexhaustible Bliss of the *Atman*, all the gods such as Brahma enjoy bliss according to their grades.

59. Like the butter in milk, the objective universe is contained in it; all the activities are based on it alone. Therefore *Brahman* is all-pervading.

60. What is neither subtle nor gross, short nor long, produced nor spent, what is devoid of form, attribute, caste and name, know it to be *Brahman*.

61. By whose light the sun and other luminaries shine forth, but which is not itself illumined by them and in whose light all this is seen, know it to be *Brahman*.

62. Like fire in a piece of red-hot iron, *Brahman* permeates the whole world in and out and all through, makes it shine and itself also shines by itself.

63. *Brahman* is distinct from the universe, yet there remains nothing apart from *Brahman*. Should any other than *Brahman* appear, it is only an illusion like water in a mirage.

64. Whatever is seen or heard, it cannot be different from *Brahman*. True knowledge finds *Brahman* to be Being-Consciousness-Bliss and one without a second.

65. Only the eye of wisdom can see the omnipresent Being-Consciousness-Bliss, but not the eye of ignorance for a blind eye cannot see the sun.

66. Like gold freed from dross, the *jiva (sadhaka)* has all his impurities burnt away by the fire of knowledge bursting into flames fanned by *sravana*, *manana* and *nidhidhyasana* (hearing, reflection and contemplation) and now he shines forth by himself.

67. Because the sun of knowledge, the chaser of darkness has risen, the *Atman* shines in the expanse of the Heart as the omnipresent sustainer of all and illumines all.

68. He who bathes in the clear, warm, ever-refreshing waters of the *Atman*, which being available everywhere, here and now, need not be sought for in special centres and seasons; such a one remains actionless. He is the knower of all; he pervades all and is ever immortal.

Vivekachudamani

This work by Shankaracharya, together with the Drik Drisya Viveka, was translated into Tamil prose by Bhagavan while he was still living in Virupaksha Cave. It is a very free translation, even the order of the paragraphs being changed to some extent.

Introduction by Sri Bhagavan

Every being in the world yearns to be always happy and free from the taint of sorrow, and desires to get rid of bodily ailments, etc., which are not of its true nature. Further, everyone cherishes the greatest love for himself, and this love is not possible in the absence of happiness. In deep sleep, though devoid of everything, one has the experience of being happy. Yet, due to the ignorance of the real nature of one's own being, which is happiness itself, people flounder in the vast ocean of material existence, forsaking the right path that leads to happiness, and act under the mistaken belief that the way to be happy consists in obtaining the pleasures of this and the other world.

Unfortunately, however, there is no such happiness which has not the taint of sorrow. It is precisely for the purpose of pointing out the straight path to true happiness that Lord Siva, taking on the guise of Sri Shankaracharya, wrote the commentaries on the Triple Canon (*Prasthana Traya*) of the *Vedanta*, which extols the excellence of this bliss; and that he demonstrated it by his own example in life. These

commentaries, however, are of little use to those ardent seekers who are intent upon realizing the bliss of Liberation but have not the scholarship necessary for studying them.

It is for such as these that Sri Shankara revealed the essence of the commentaries in this short treatise, *The Crown Gem of Discrimination*, explaining in detail the points that have to be grasped by those who seek Liberation, and thereby directing them to the true and direct path.

Sri Shankara begins by observing that it is hard indeed to attain human birth, and that, having attained it, one should strive to achieve the bliss of Liberation, which is really only the nature of one's being. By *jnana* or spiritual knowledge alone is this Bliss to be realized, and *jnana* is achieved only through *vichara* or steady enquiry. In order to learn this method of enquiry, says Sri Shankara, one should seek the grace of a Guru; and he then proceeds to describe the qualities of the Guru and his disciple and how the latter should approach and serve his master. He further emphasizes that in order to realize the bliss of Liberation one's own individual effort is an essential factor. Mere book learning never yields this bliss; it can be realized only through Self-enquiry or *vichara*, which consists of *sravana* or devoted attention to the precepts of the Guru, *manana* or deep contemplation and *nidhidhyasana* or the cultivation of equanimity in the Self.

The three bodies, are non-self and are unreal. The Self, that is the *Aham* or 'I' is quite different from them. It is due to ignorance that the sense of Self or the 'I' notion is foisted on that which is not Self, and this indeed is bondage. Since from ignorance arises bondage, from Knowledge ensues liberation. To know this from the Guru is *sravana*.

The process of *manana*, which is subtle enquiry or deep contemplation, consists in rejecting the three bodies consisting

of the five sheaths (physical, vital, mental, intellectual, and blissful), as not 'I' and discovering through subtle enquiry of 'Who am I?' that which is different from all three and exists single and universal in the Heart as *Aham* or 'I', just as a stalk of grass is delicately drawn out from its sheath. This 'I' is denoted by the word *tvam* (in the scriptural dictum '*Tat-tvam-asi'*, That thou art).

The world of name and form is but an adjunct of *Tat* or *Brahman* and, having no separate reality, is rejected as reality and affirmed as nothing else but *Brahman*. The instruction of the disciple by the Guru in the *Mahavakya 'Tat tvam asi'*, which declares the identity of the Self and the Supreme, is this *Upadesa* (spiritual guidance). The disciple is then enjoined to remain in the beatific state of *Aham-Brahman*, (I—the Absolute). Nevertheless, the old tendencies of the mind sprout up thick and strong and constitute an obstruction. These tendencies are threefold and ego is their root. The ego flourishes in the externalized and differentiating consciousness caused by the forces of projection due to *rajas*, and veiling due to *tamas*.

To fix the mind firmly in the Heart until these forces are destroyed and to awaken with unswerving, ceaseless vigilance the true and cognate tendency which is characteristic of the *Atman* and is expressed by sayings: *'Aham Brahmasmi'* (I am *Brahman*), and *'Brahmaivaham'* (*Brahman* alone am I) is termed *nidhidhyasana* or *Atmanusandhana*, that is constancy in the Self. This is otherwise called *bhakti*, *yoga* and *dhyana*.

Atmanusandhana has been compared to churning curds in order to make butter, the mind being compared to the churn, the heart to the curds, and the practice of concentration on the Self to the process of churning. Just as butter is made by churning the curds and fire by friction, so the natural and changeless state of *nirvikalpa samadhi* is produced by

unswerving vigilant concentration on the Self, ceaseless like the unbroken flow of oil. This readily and spontaneously yields that direct, immediate, unobstructed, and universal perception of *Brahman*, which is at once knowledge and experience and which transcends time and space.

This perception is Self-realization. Achieving it cuts the knot of the Heart. The false delusions of ignorance, the vicious and age-long tendencies of the mind which constitute this knot are destroyed. All doubts are dispelled and the bondage of karma is severed.

Thus in this *Crown Gem of Discrimination* Sri Shankara has described *samadhi* or spiritual trance which is the limitless bliss of liberation, beyond doubt and duality, and at the same time has indicated the means for its attainment. To attain this state of freedom from duality is the real purpose of life, and only he who has done so is a *jivanmukta*, liberated while yet alive, not one who has a mere theoretical understanding of what constitutes *Purushartha* or the desired end and aim of human endeavour.

Thus defining a *jivanmukta*, Sri Shankara declares him to be free from the bonds of threefold karma (*sanchita*, *agami* and *prarabdha*). The disciple attains this state and then relates his personal experience. He who is liberated is indeed free to act as he pleases, and when he leaves the body, he abides in Liberation and never returns to this birth, which is death.

Sri Shankara thus describes Realization, that is Liberation, as twofold, *Jivanmukti* and *Videhamukti*, as explained above. Moreover, in this short treatise, written in the form of a dialogue between a Guru and his disciple, he has considered many other relevant topics.

(By courtesy of the *Sunday Times*, Madras)

Invocation

Rejoice eternally! The Heart rejoices at the feet of the Lord, who is the Self, shining within as 'I-I' eternally, so that there is no alternation of night and day. This will result in removal of ignorance of the Self.

Praise to the Guru

Sri Shankara Jagadguru shines as the form of Lord Siva. In this work, *Vivekachudamani*, he has expounded in detail the heart of *Vedanta* and its meaning in order that the most ardent of those qualified for liberation may acquaint themselves with it and attain immortality.

Homage to the ever blissful Sri Govinda *Sadguru* who is to be known only by the ultimate truth of *Vedanta* and not by any other standard.

The Text

It is indeed very difficult to obtain a human body. Even though one does, it is very difficult to become a *brahmin*. Even if one becomes one, it is still more difficult to walk in the path of *vaidika dharma* in which the Vedas are chanted. Still more difficult is it to become a perfect scholar, and more difficult again to undertake enquiry into the Self and the non-Self. Yet more difficult than all this is to obtain wisdom born of experience of the Self. Liberation in the form of abidance as the Self, born of that wisdom, is not to be attained except as a result of righteous actions performed throughout countless crores of births. However, even though all the above qualifications may not be obtained, liberation is assured through the grace of the Lord if only three conditions are obtained: that is a human birth, intense desire for liberation, and association with sages.

If, by some great penance, that rarity, a human body is obtained, with its ability to understand the meaning of the scriptures, and yet, owing to attachment to insentient things, effort is not made to attain the immutable state of liberation, which is one's own true state, then indeed one is a fool committing suicide. What greater fool is there than one who does not seek his own good?

Liberation is not to be achieved through endless cycles of time by reading the scriptures or worshipping the gods or by anything else than knowledge of the unity of *Brahman* and *atman.* Wealth or actions made possible by wealth cannot produce the yearning for liberation. Therefore the scriptures have rightly declared that action can never produce liberation. In order to obtain liberation one must heroically renounce even the very desire for the pleasures of this world. Then one must seek the perfect guru who is the embodiment of peace and must concentrate one's mind and meditate ceaselessly on that into which one is initiated. Such meditation leads to abidance in the wisdom of the experience obtained. Embarking in that ship of wisdom, one must ferry over to the shore of liberation that self which is immersed in the ocean of *samsara.* Therefore the courageous aspirant should give up attachment to wife, sons and property and give up all activity. By so doing he should free himself from bondage to the cycle of birth and death and seek liberation. Actions are prescribed only for purification of the mind, not for realization of the Self. Knowledge of the truth of the Self is obtained only by Self-enquiry and not by any number of actions. One who mistakes a rope for a serpent is cast into fear thereby and his fear and distress can be removed only by the knowledge that it is a rope. A friend who knows this tells him so and he investigates and finds that it is so. There is no other way. Similarly, knowledge of *Brahman* is obtained through

initiation by the Guru and enquiry into Truth. That Truth cannot be realized through purificatory baths, offerings, breath-control, or any other practice. He who seeks liberation through knowledge of the Self must enquire into the Self with the help of the perfect Guru who, being free from desires, is a knower of *Brahman* and an ocean of grace. It is mainly through enquiry that he who is competent achieves knowledge of the Self; circumstance, time, and the grace of the Lord are but aids to the quest.

In order to be qualified for enquiry into the Self, a man must have a powerful intellect and ability to seize the essential and reject the inessential besides the various qualities enumerated in the scriptures. What are these? He must be able to discriminate between the real and the unreal. He must have an unattached mind. He must ardently desire liberation. And he must be tireless in practice. Only such a one is qualified to enquire into *Brahman*. The qualifications are enumerated as follows:

1. Discrimination between the real and the unreal.

2. Disinclination to enjoy the fruits of one's actions either in this or in any further life.

3. The six virtues of tranquillity, self-control, withdrawal, forbearance, faith, and concentration of the Self.

4. Intense yearning for liberation.

The aspirant must indeed have these qualities in order to attain abidance in the Self; without them there can be no realization of the Truth. Let us see what these are:

1. Discrimination between the real and the unreal is the firm conviction that *Brahman* alone is the Truth and that the world is unreal.

2. We both observe and learn from the scriptures that all pleasures experienced by animate beings, from Brahma downwards, are transient and impermanent and involve sorrows and imperfections; giving up the desire for them is *vairagya* or non-attachment.

3. (a) Tranquillity implies fixing the mind upon its target by meditating frequently on the imperfections of things and becoming dissatisfied with them.

(b) Self-control means controlling the outer and inner sense organs and fixing them in their respective centres.

(c) Withdrawal means giving up all outer activity by fixing the mind on its target so firmly that it is not led by its previous tendencies to dwell on objects.

(d) Forbearance means the endurance of any sorrows that may befall without trying to avoid them.

(e) Faith, which is the cause of Self-realization, is the outcome of firm conviction of the truth of *Vedantic* scriptures and of the words of the Guru.

(f) Concentration is making every effort to fix the mind on the pure *Brahman* despite its wandering nature.

These are said to be the six qualifications needed for the practice of *samadhi*.

4. Intense yearning for liberation arises from the desire to free oneself by realizing one's true nature, attaining freedom from the bondage of the body and ego which is caused by ignorance. This yearning may be of different grades. It may be only dull or medium, but it may be highly developed by means of the six qualifications mentioned above, and in this case it can bear fruit. But if renunciation and yearning are weak, the result may be mere appearance like a mirage in the desert.

Of all the means leading to liberation, *bhakti* or devotion is the best; and this *bhakti* means seeking the truth of one's own Self — so say the sages.

The aspirant who possesses the necessary qualifications and wishes to undertake Self-enquiry must seek a Sadguru and bow down to him with humility, awe, and reverence and serve him in various ways. The Sadguru is one capable of destroying the bondage of those who adhere to him. He is an ocean of immutable wisdom. His knowledge is all-comprehensive. He is pure as crystal. He has attained victory over desires. He is supreme among the knowers of *Brahman.* He rests calmly in *Brahman* like a fire that has consumed its fuel. He is an endless reservoir of mercy. There is no explanation why he is merciful; it is his very nature. He befriends all *sadhus* who adhere to him. To such a Guru the disciple appeals: "I bow down to you, my Master, true friend of the helpless! I pray you to help me cross the terrible ocean of bondage into which I have fallen and by which I am overwhelmed. A mere gracious look from you is a raft that will save me. Oh flowing stream of grace! I am shaken violently by the winds of a perverse fate. I do not know which way to turn. I am tormented by the unquenchable fire of *samsara* that burns around me. I continually pray to you to calm me by the nectar of your grace. *Sadhus* such as you who abide ever in peace, are great and magnanimous and constantly benefit the world, like the season of spring. Not only have they themselves crossed the ocean of *samsara*, but they can calm the fears of others. Just as the world after being heated by the burning rays of the sun is calmed by the cool and gracious rays of the moon, so also it is in your nature to give protection for no reason whatever to people like me who have taken refuge with you from the ocean of *samsara.* Indeed,

being helpless and having no other refuge, I have cast on you the burden of protecting me from this *samsara* of birth and death. Oh Lord! The flames of the conflagration of individual being have scorched me; cool me through the outpouring of your gracious words. Your words bring peace, being born of your experience of divine bliss. Blessed are they that have even received your gracious glance. Blessed are they who have become acceptable to you. How shall I cross the ocean and what means is there? I do not indeed know what is my fate. You alone must protect me, setting me free from this sorrow of *samsara*."

The disciple thus takes refuge with the Guru, as enjoined by the scriptures. He waits upon the Guru, unable to bear the burning winds of *samsara*. His mind grows calm through following the Guru's bidding. The teacher, that is, the knower of *Brahman*, casts upon him his gracious glance and touches his soul inwardly, giving him assurance of protection: "My learned disciple, have no fear. No harm shall come to you hereafter. I will give you a single mighty means by which you can cross this terrible, fathomless ocean of *samsara* and thus obtain supreme Bliss. By this means, world renouncing *sadhus* have crossed it and your bondage also shall be destroyed here and now. The scriptures declare: 'The means of liberation for seekers are faith, devotion, meditation, and *yoga*.' You too shall obtain these means, and if you practise them constantly shall be set free from the bondage to the body caused by ignorance. You are eternally of the nature of *Paramatma* and this bondage of *samsara*, of non-Self, has come upon you only through ignorance. It will be utterly destroyed by knowledge born of enquiry into the Self."

Gazing on the Guru who says this, the disciple asks: "Oh Master, what is bondage? How did it come, how does it survive,

and how is it to be destroyed? What is the non-Self? And what, indeed, is the Self? And what is discrimination between Self and non-Self? Graciously bless me with answers to these questions, so that by hearing your replies I may be blessed."

To this request of the disciple the Master answers: "Dear soul! If you have felt the desire to be the Self, free from the bondage caused by ignorance, you are indeed blessed. You have achieved life's purpose. You have sanctified thereby your whole line. Just as sons and other relations pay off the debts of a father, so there are others who will free one from bearing a burden on one's head. But the distress caused by hunger can be cured only by eating for oneself, not by others eating for one. And if you are sick you must take medicine and keep a proper diet yourself; no one else can do it for you. Similarly, bondage comes to you through your own ignorance and can only be removed by yourself. However learned a man may be, he cannot rid himself of the ignorance born of desire and fate, except by realizing *Brahman* with his own infinite knowledge. How does it help you if others see the moon? You must open your eyes and see it for yourself. Liberation cannot be obtained through *sankhya*, *yoga*, ritual, or learning but only through knowledge of the oneness of *Brahman* and *atman*. Just as the beautiful form of the *veena* and the music of its strings only give pleasure to people, but confer no kingdom on them, so also plausible words, clever arguments, ability to expound the scriptures, and the erudition of the learned only give pleasure for the moment. Even study of the scriptures is useless since it does not give the desired result. Once one knows the truth of the Supreme, study of the scriptures becomes unnecessary because there is nothing more to be gained. Therefore one must pass over the great forest of the *sastras*, which only yields confusion of mind, and must instead actually experience the Self through the Guru, who is a knower

of Reality. To one who is bitten by the serpent of ignorance, salvation can come only from the elixir of Self-knowledge and not from the Vedas, scriptures, incantations, or any other remedies. Just as a person's sickness is not removed without taking medicine, so too his state of bondage is not removed by scriptural texts such as 'I am *Brahman*' without his own direct experience of the Self. One does not become a king by merely saying, 'I am a king', without destroying one's enemies and obtaining the reality of power. Similarly, one does not obtain liberation as *Brahman* itself by merely repeating the scriptural text 'I am *Brahman*', without destroying the duality caused by ignorance and directly experiencing the Self. A treasure trove hidden under the ground is not obtained by merely hearing about it, but only by being told by a friend who knows it, and then digging and removing the slab that hides it and taking it out from below the ground. Similarly, one must hear about one's true state from a Guru who knows *Brahman*, and then meditate upon it and experience it directly through constant meditation. Without this, the true form of one's own Self, that is hidden by *maya*, cannot be realized through mere argumentation. Therefore, those who are wise themselves make every effort to remove the bondage of individual existence and obtain liberation, just as they would to get rid of some disease.

"Beloved disciple, the question that you have put is of the utmost importance and acceptable to realized souls well versed in the scriptures. It is like an aphorism bearing a subtle meaning and understandable to him who craves liberation. Listen to this reply with a calm and undisturbed mind and your bonds will be cut asunder at once. The primary means of obtaining liberation is *vairagya* (dispassion). Other qualities such as tranquillity, self-control, forbearance, and renunciation of activity can come later, later again the hearing of *Vedantic*

truth, and still later, meditation on that truth. Finally comes perpetual and prolonged meditation on *Brahman*. This gives rise to *nirvikalpa samadhi*, through which is attained the strength for direct realization of the supreme Self. This power of direct realization enables the discriminating soul to experience the bliss of liberation here and now. Such is the *sadhana* leading to liberation.

"Now I shall tell you about discrimination between Self and non-Self. Listen and keep it firmly in mind. Of these two I shall speak first about the non-Self.

"The brain, bones, fat, flesh, blood, skin, and semen are the seven factors that constitute the gross body. So say those who know. The feet, thighs, chest, shoulders, back, head, etc., are its members. People regard it as 'I' owing to the mind's attachment to it. It is the primary attraction to all, and the most obvious. It is made up of ether, air, fire, water, and earth which, as the subtle essences, form sense objects, and the groups of five such as sound, touch, sight, taste, and smell. The ego (*jiva*) being intent on pleasure, regards these as means of enjoyment. Foolish and ignorant persons are bound to sense objects by the rope of desire, attracted according to the power of their karma which leads them up and down and causes them to wander in distress. The serpent and deer die through attachment to sound, the elephant through attachment to touch, the fish through attachment to taste, and the bee through attachment to smell. If these die through attachment to a single sense, what must be the fate of man, who is attached to all five? The evil effects of sense objects are more harmful than the poison of the cobra,[1] because poison only kills him who takes it, whereas sense objects bring destruction to him who

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1 In Sanskrit this is a play of words, as *vishaya* means sense objects and *visha* poison.

sees them or even thinks of them. He alone obtains liberation who, with the sharp sword of detachment, cuts the strong rope of love for sense objects and so frees himself from them. Otherwise, even though a man be well versed in all the six *sastras*, he will not obtain liberation. Desire, like a crocodile, instantly seizes the aspirant after liberation who tries to cross the ocean of *samsara* and reach the shore of liberation without firm detachment, and straightaway drags him down into the ocean. Only that aspirant who kills the crocodile with the keen sword of detachment can cross the ocean and safely reach the shore of liberation. He who, lacking good sense, enters upon one path after another of attachment to sense objects, experiences ever greater distress until he is finally destroyed. But he who exerts control over himself, walks on the path of discrimination laid down by the Guru and attains his goal. This indeed is the truth. Therefore, if you really want liberation cast away the pleasure of sense objects as though they were poison. Hold firmly to the virtues of contentment, compassion, forgiveness, sincerity, tranquillity, and self-control. Give up all actions performed out of attachment to the body, and strive ceaselessly for liberation from the bondage caused by ignorance. This body is finally consumed, whether by earth, fire, beasts, or birds. He who, forgetting his real nature, mistakes this body for the Self, gets attached to it and cherishes it and by so doing becomes the murderer of the Self. He who still cares for the body while seeking the Self, is like one who catches hold of a crocodile to cross a river. Infatuation with the body is indeed fatal to the aspirant after liberation. Only he who overcomes this infatuation attains liberation. Therefore, you too must overcome infatuation for the body and for wife and children. Then you will attain liberation, i.e., the supreme state of Vishnu which the great sages have attained. This gross body is very much to be deprecated,

consisting as it does of skin, flesh, blood, arteries and veins, fat, marrow and bones, and is full of urine and excreta. It is produced by one's own past actions out of the gross elements. The subtle elements unite together to produce these gross elements. Thus it becomes a habitation for the enjoyment of pleasures by the ego, like his home for a householder. It is in the waking state that the ego experiences the gross body. It is in this state alone that it can be experienced, when the Self, though really separate from it, is deluded into identifying itself with it and, through the external organs, enjoys the various wonderful gross objects of pleasure such as garlands, sandal paste, woman, etc. Know that the whole of outward *samsara* comes upon the spirit *(Purusha)* through the medium of the gross body. Birth, growth, old age, decay, and death are its characteristics. Childhood, boyhood, youth, and old age are its stages. Castes and orders of life are ordained for it. It is also subject to different modes of treatment, to honour and dishonour, and is the abode of various diseases.

"The ears, skin, eyes, nose, and tongue are organs of knowledge because they enable us to cognize objects. The vocal organs, hands, feet, etc., are organs of action because they perform their respective modes of action. The internal organ (mind) is single in itself but is variously named mind, intellect, ego, or desire *(Chitta)*. Mind is the faculty of desire or repulsion. Intellect is the faculty of determining the truth of things. The ego is the faculty which identifies itself with the body as self. Desire *(Chitta)* is the faculty that seeks for pleasure. Just as gold and silver are shaped into various forms, so the single life breath becomes *prana*, *apana*, *vyana*, *udana*, *samana*. The group of five elements (ether, fire, water, air, earth), the group of five organs of knowledge (ears, eyes, skin, nose, tongue), the group of five organs of action (vocal organs, hands, feet, anus, genitals), the group of five vital airs *(prana*,

apana, vyana, udana, samana), the group of four internal organs *(chitta, manas, buddhi, ahankara),* all these together compose the subtle body called the city of eight constituents. Being possessed of desires, it is produced out of the elements prior to their subdivision and mutual combination. The soul has brought this beginningless superimposition upon itself by its actions. This state of experience is the dream state. In this state the mind functions of its own accord, experiencing itself as the actor, due to its various tendencies and to the effect of experiences of the waking state. In this state the Self, shining with its own light, is superimposed upon the mind without being attached to its actions and remains a mere witness. Just as the axe and other tools of the carpenter are only the means for his activities, so this subtle body is only the means for the activities of the Self which is ever aware. The internal organs perform all their actions owing to the mere proximity of the Self, whereas the Self remains unaffected and untouched by these actions. Good or bad eyesight is due to the state of the eyes, deafness to the ears, and so on; they do not affect the Self, the knower. Those who know say that inhalation, exhalation, yawning, sneezing, etc., are functions of the life-breath, as also are hunger and thirst. The inner organ (mind), with the light of reflected consciousness, has its seat in the outer organs, such as the eye, and identifies itself with them. This inner organ is the ego. The ego is the actor and enjoyer, identifying itself with the body as 'I'. Under the influence of the three *gunas* it assumes the three states of waking, dream and deep sleep. When sense objects are to its liking it becomes happy, when not, unhappy. Thus, pleasure and pain pertain to the ego and are not characteristics of the ever-blissful Self. Objects appear to be pleasant because of the Self and not because of any inherent bliss that is in them. The Self has no grief in it. Its

bliss, which is independent of objects, is experienced by everyone in the state of deep sleep and therefore it is dear to everyone. This is borne out by the authority of the *Upanishads* and by direct perception, tradition, and inference.

"The Supreme (*Brahman*) has a wonderful *shakti* (power or energy) known as 'the undifferentiated', 'ignorance', '*maya*', etc. She is of the form of the three *gunas.* Her existence is inferred by those of understanding from the effects produced by her. She is far superior to all objectivity and creates the entire universe. She is neither being nor non-being, neither does she partake of the nature of both. She is neither composed of parts nor indivisible nor both. She is neither form nor formless nor both. She is none of these. Such as she is, she is indescribable. She is also beginningless. Yet just as the deluded fear of a snake in a piece of rope is removed by recognizing the rope as such, so too *maya* may be destroyed by integral knowledge of *Brahman.* She has her three *gunas* which are to be known from their effects. *Rajas,* whose colour is red, is of the nature of activity and is the power of projection. It is the original cause of all activity. From it arise the mental modifications that lead to desires and sorrows. Lust, anger, grasping, pride, hatred, egotism are all tendencies characteristic of *rajas.* This projecting power is the cause of bondage because it creates outward or worldly tendencies. *Tamas,* whose colour is black, is the veiling power. It makes things appear other than what they are. Through its alliance with the power of projection, it is the original cause of man's constant rebirth. He who is enveloped by this veiling power, wise or learned though he may be, clever, expert in the meaning of the scriptures, capable of wonderful achievements, will not be able to grasp the truth of the Self, even though the Guru and others clearly explain it in various ways. Being under the sway of that veiling power, he esteems things which bear the imprint of delusion and

ignorance and achieves them. Even though he is taught, he who is enveloped by this veiling power still lacks the clear knowledge and understanding without which it cannot be removed; he always remains in doubt and comes to decisions contrary to the truth. At the same time, the power of projection makes him restless. Ignorance, indolence, inertia, sleepiness, omission of the discharge of duties, and stupidity are the characteristics of *tamas*. One who has these qualities does not comprehend anything but is like a sleeping man or a stone. Now, coming to *sattva*, whose colour is white: although this is quite clear like pure water, yet it gets murky if mixed with *rajas* and *tamas*. The Self shines through *sattva* just as the sun illumines the entire world of matter. Even from mixed *sattva* virtuous qualities result, such as modesty, *yama* and *niyama*, faith, devotion and the desire for devotion, divine qualities and turning away from the unreal. From the clarity of pure *sattva* results Self-realization, supreme peace, never failing contentment, perfect happiness, abiding in the Self which is the fount of eternal bliss. The undifferentiated power which is spoken of as a compound of the three *gunas* is the causal body of the soul. Its state is that of deep sleep in which all the sense organs and functions of the mind are at rest. In this state all perceptions cease and the mind in its subtle seed-like form experiences supreme bliss. This is borne out by the universal experience, 'I slept soundly and knew nothing.'

"The above is a description of the non-Self. These things do not pertain to the Self: the body, the sense organs, the mind, the ego and its modes, happiness due to sense objects, the elements from ether downwards, and the whole world up to the undifferentiated *maya*. All this is non-Self. From *mahat* (cosmic intelligence) down to the gross body, everything is the effect of *maya*. Know these to be the non-Self. These are all unreal like a mirage in the desert.

"Now I am going to tell you about the real nature of the supreme Self, by realizing which, man attains liberation and is freed from bondage. That realization of 'I' is indeed the Self which is experienced as 'I-I' shining of its own accord, the absolute Being, the witness of the three states of waking, dream, and deep sleep, distinct from the five sheaths, aware of the mental modes in the waking and dream states, and of their absence in the state of deep sleep. That Self sees all of its own accord but is never seen by any of these. It gives light to the intellect and ego but is not enlightened by them. It pervades the universe and by its light all this insentient universe is illumined, but the universe does not pervade it even to the slightest extent. In its presence the body, senses, mind and intellect enter upon their functions as if commanded by it. By that unbroken knowledge, all things from the ego to the body, objects and our experience of them, occur and are perceived. By it life and the various organs are set in motion. That inner Self, as the primeval spirit, eternal, ever effulgent, full and infinite Bliss, single, indivisible, whole and living, shines in everyone as the witnessing awareness. That Self in its splendour, shining in the cavity of the Heart as the subtle, pervasive yet unmanifest ether, illumines this universe like the sun. It is aware of the modifications of the mind and ego, of the actions of the body, sense organs and life-breath. It takes their form as fire does that of a heated ball of iron; yet it undergoes no change in doing so. This Self is neither born nor dies, it neither grows nor decays, nor does it suffer any change. When a pot is broken the space inside it is not, and similarly, when the body dies, the Self in it remains eternal. It is distinct from the causal *maya* and its effects. It is pure knowledge. It illumines Being and non-being alike and is without attributes. It is the witness of the intellect in the waking, dream, and deep sleep states. It shines as 'I-I', as

ever-present, direct experience. Know that supreme Self by means of a one-pointed mind and know 'This 'I' is *Brahman'*. Thus through the intellect you may know the Self in yourself, by yourself, and by this means cross the ocean of birth and death and become one who has achieved his life purpose and ever remain as the Self.

"Mistaking the body or not-I for the Self or I, is the cause of all misery, that is, of all bondage. This bondage comes through ignorance of the cause of birth and death, for it is through ignorance that men regard these insentient bodies as real, mistaking them for the Self and sustaining them with sense objects and finally getting destroyed by them, just as the silkworm protects itself by the threads that it emits, but is finally destroyed by them. For those who mistake the rope for a serpent, the integral pure effulgence of the pristine state is veiled by *tamas*, just as the dragon's head covers the sun in an eclipse, and as a result, the spirit (*Purusha*) forgets his reality. He is devoured by the dragon of delusion and, mistaking the non-Self for the Self, is overpowered by mental states and submerged in the fathomless ocean of *samsara* full of the poison of sense enjoyments, and, now sinking, now rising, he finds no way of escape. Such are the torments caused by the projecting power of *rajas* together with the veiling of *tamas*. Just as the layers of clouds caused by the rays of the sun increase until they hide the sun itself, so the bondage of ego caused by ignorance in the Self expands until it hides that very Self. Just as frost and cold winds torment one on a wintry day when the sun is hidden by clouds, so too when *tamas* covers the Self, the projecting power of *rajas* deludes the ignorant into mistaking the non-Self for the Self and torments them with many sorrows. So it is by these two powers alone that the Self has been brought into bondage. Of this tree of *samsara*, *tamas* is the seed, the 'I am the body' idea is the

shoot, desire is the young leaf, activity the water that makes it grow, the body the trunk, a man's successive lives the branches, the sense organs the twigs, sense objects the flowers, and diverse sorrows caused by activity the fruit. The ego is the bird sitting in the tree and enjoying its fruit.

"This bondage of the non-Self, born of ignorance, causing endless sorrow through birth, death, and old age, is without beginning, yet its complete destruction can be brought about in the way that I will tell you. Have faith in the Vedas and perform all the actions prescribed by them without seeking for any gain from doing so. This will give you purity of mind. With this pure mind, meditate incessantly and by doing so you will directly know the Self. This Self-knowledge is the keen sword that cuts asunder the bonds. No other weapon or contrivance is capable of destroying them, nor wind nor fire nor countless actions.

"The Self is covered over by the five sheaths caused by the power of ignorance. It is hidden from sight like the water of a pond covered with weeds. When the weeds are removed the water is revealed and can be used by man to quench his thirst and cool him from the heat. In the same way, by process of elimination, you should with keen intellect discard the objective five sheaths from the Self as 'not this, not this'. Know the Self distinct from the body and from all forms, like a stalk of grass in its sheaths of leaf. Know it as eternal, pure, single in its essence, unattached, with no duties to perform, ever blissful and self-effulgent. He who is liberated realizes that all objective reality, which is superimposed on the Self as the idea of a serpent is on the rope, is really no other than the Self, and he himself is the Self. Therefore the wise aspirant should undertake discrimination between the Self and the non-Self. Of the five sheaths (food, life-breath, mind, intellect, and bliss), the gross body is created out of food, increasing

by eating it and perishing when there is none. It is the sheath of food. Compounded of skin, blood, flesh, fat, marrow, excreta, and urine, it is most filthy. It has no existence before birth or after death but appears between them. It undergoes change every moment. There is no set law governing that change. It is an object, like a pot, is insentient and has a variety of forms. It is acted upon by other forces. The Self, on the other hand, is distinct from this body and is single, eternal, and pure. It is indestructible, though the body with its limbs is destroyed. The Self is the witness who knows the characteristics of the body, its modes of activity and its three states. It is self-aware and directs the body. Such being the contrast between the body and the Self, how can the body be the Self? The fool thinks of it as the Self. The man of wise action with some measure of discrimination, takes body and soul together for 'I', but the really wise man who conducts the enquiry with firm discrimination knows himself always as the Supreme *Brahman,* the Being which is of its own nature. The 'I am the body' idea is the seed of all sorrow. Therefore, just as you do not identify yourself with your shadow body, image body, dream body, or the body that you have in your imagination, cease also to associate the Self in any way with the body of skin, flesh, and bones. Make every effort to root out this error and holding fast to the knowledge of reality as the absolute *Brahman*, destroy the mind and obtain supreme peace. Then you will have no more births. Even a learned scholar who perfectly understands the meaning of *Vedanta* has no hope of liberation if, owing to delusion, he cannot give up the idea of the nonexistent body as the Self.

"Now we come to the vital body of *prana,* which is the life-breath with the five organs of action. The aforementioned sheath of food enters upon its course of activity when filled by this vital force. It is nothing but a modification of air, and

like air it enters into the body and comes out of it. It does not know its own desires and antipathies or those of others. It is eternally dependent on the Self. Therefore the vital body cannot be the Self.

"The mental sheath is the mind with its organs of knowledge. This is the cause of the wrong concept of the Self as 'I' and 'mine'. It is very powerful, being endowed with diversity of thought-forms, beginning with the 'I-thought'. It fills and pervades the vital sheath. The ever-blazing fire of the mental sheath is consuming this whole world, lit by the five sense organs as sacrificial priests, fed by sense objects as the fuel, and kept ablaze by the latent tendencies. There is no ignorance apart from the mind. It is the cause of the bondage of birth and death. With the emergence of the mind everything arises, and with its subsidence everything ceases. In the dream state, in which there are no objects, the mind creates its dream world of enjoyers and others, by its own powers. Similarly, all that it perceives in the waking state is its own display. It is the experience of all that nothing appears when the mind subsides in deep sleep. Therefore the bondage of *samsara* is only superimposed on the Self by the mind. Actually it has no reality. Just as the wind gathers the clouds in the sky and then disperses them, so the mind causes the bondage but also causes liberation. The mind first creates in man an attachment to the body and to all sense objects, with the result that he is bound by his attachment like a beast tethered by a rope. Under the influence of *rajas* and *tamas* it is enfeebled and entangles man in desire for the body and objects, but under the influence of *sattva* it breaks away from *rajas* and *tamas* and attains to non-attachment and discrimination and rejects sense objects as though they were poison. Therefore the wise seeker after liberation must first establish himself in discrimination and desirelessness. The mind is a great tiger roaming wild in the

huge jungle of sense objects. Therefore aspirants should keep away from it. It is only the mind that conjures up before the Self subtle and gross objects and all the variations of body, caste, and station in life, qualities and action, causes and effects. So doing, it tempts and deludes the Self, which is really unattached pure intelligence, binding it by the qualities of body, senses, and life and deluding it with the idea of 'I' and 'mine' in the fruits of action that it creates. By means of this false representation, the mind creates the myth of *samsara* (bondage) for the spirit. This is the primal cause of the sorrow of birth and death which binds those who are subject to the faults of *rajas* and *tamas* and lack discrimination. Just as cloud masses revolve through the air, so does the whole world revolve through the delusion of the mind. Therefore, those who know reality declare that the mind is ignorance. He who seeks liberation must examine his mind by his own efforts and once the mind is purified by such introspection liberation is obtained and appears obvious and natural. Out of desire for liberation you should root out all other desires, renounce activity and take to perpetual preoccupation with Truth (*sravana, manana*) which will lead on to perpetual meditation *(nididhyasana)*. Then alone can the waves of the mind be stilled. Therefore even this mind sheath cannot be the real Self, since it has a beginning and an end, and is subject to modifications and characterized by pain and grief, and is an object of perception.

"The intellect with the five organs of knowledge is the *vijnana maya* sheath and is also the cause of bondage for the spirit. It is a modification of the unmanifest, beginningless Self which has assumed the form of the ego and conducts all activities through the reflected light of consciousness. It is the conscious agent of activity and its attributes are intelligence and actions. It regards the body and senses as 'I' and their

mode of life, duties, actions, and qualities as 'mine'. It performs good or evil actions as dictated by its previous tendencies, and as a result of these actions attains to higher or lower regions and wanders there until it is attracted to rebirth in some enticing womb. It experiences the states of waking, dream, and deep sleep and the pleasant and painful fruits of its actions. Within this sheath of knowledge, the Self throbs as the self-effulgent light, the supreme soul, homogeneous, the Truth, all pervasive, complete, immutable, the supreme Lord. Yet the Self assumes limitations through the false superimposition of the intellect on it in this sheath, because this is close to it, and in fact the closest of its adjuncts. As a result it is deluded into thinking that it is this sheath. Just as a pot might seem to be different from its clay, so it imagines itself to be different from itself, to be the agent and the enjoyer, and seems to be limited in such ways, although it is like the fire in a ball of hot iron, unaffected by the shape of the ball."

In answer to the Guru, the disciple says: "Master, I accept your statement that, whether through delusion or not, the Supreme Self has come to regard itself as the ego. But since this superimposition of the ego-concept is beginningless, it cannot be supposed to have an end either. How, then, can there be liberation? But if there is no liberation the ego-concept becomes eternal and bondage also becomes eternal. Pray enlighten me on this point."

To this the Master replies: "That is a good question, my learned disciple. Now listen with one-pointed mind to my explanation. Whatever has been conjured up by delusion must be examined in the pure light of reason. Things appear real as long as the delusion lasts and perish as unreal and nonexistent as soon as it passes, just like illusion of a serpent seen in a piece of rope and appearing real as long as the illusion lasts.

Really the Self is unattached, actionless, characterless, immutable, formless, Being-Consciousness-Bliss, the inner witness. It has no sort of relationship with anything. To think that it has is a mere delusion like the appearance of blue in the sky. The false attitude of the ego to the Self is due to the relationship with the beginningless false vehicle, but even this sense of relationship is the result of delusion. Although this attitude of the ego to the Self is without a beginning, that does not make it real. Just as water becomes clear as soon as the dirt is removed from it, so is it with the Self when the effects of the ego and its false adjuncts are dropped from it and ignorance disappears through discrimination between Self and non-Self. Then appears the true self-effulgent knowledge of the oneness of God and Self.

"The discarding of the beginningless ignorance with its cause and effects and bodies and states, is like the ending of the beginningless nonexistence, or the ending of a dream when the waking state supervenes. Liberation from the bondage of the false ego concept can never come about except through knowledge acquired by discrimination between the Self and the non-Self. Therefore you also must discriminate in order to remove the nonexistent ego. Even this intellectual sheath is subject to change, insentient, a part of a whole, and an object of perception and therefore it cannot be the *Atman*. Can the non-eternal ever become eternal?

"Coming now to the sheath of Bliss: this is only a modification of ignorance on which the Supreme Self is reflected. It reveals itself at will in all three states, waking, dreaming, and deep sleep, and yields the different modes of bliss from perceiving, obtaining, and experiencing things. It is experienced effortlessly by all to some extent in deep sleep, but *sadhus* who have practised discrimination, experience the

bliss of it perpetually without effort and its fullness in the deep sleep state. However, even this sheath of bliss cannot be the supreme Self, since it is subject to change and possesses attributes. It is the effect of past good deeds and a modification of *prakriti* and it abides in the other sheaths which are themselves also modifications. If, by the rejection of false ideas, all five sheaths are eliminated, the Self alone is experienced as 'I-I'. It alone remains, whole and Self-aware, distinct from the five sheaths, the witness of the three states, self-effulgent, immutable, untainted, everlasting Bliss. It is like Devadatta[2] who neither is the pot nor partakes of its nature but is only the witness. The Self is not the five sheaths, which are objects, nor does it partake of their nature, but is a mere witness of them."

To this the disciple replies: "Oh Master, after rejecting the five sheaths as unreal, I find nothing remaining except the void, so what is there to be known as 'I-I', as the truth of the Self?"

The Guru replies: "Oh learned one, you are skilful in discrimination and have spoken the truth. The rule of enquiry or perception is: 'That which is perceived by something else has the latter for its witness. When there is no agent of perception there can be no question of the thing having been perceived at all.' Accordingly, the Self, as awareness, cognizes not only itself but also the existence of the ego with its various modifications of the transient names and forms and their nescience. Therefore it is the Self which is their witness. Beyond it there is nothing to know. It is aware of itself through its own effulgence and so is its own witness. It is single and immutable in the waking, dream, and deep sleep states. It makes itself known as Being-Consciousness-Bliss and is

[2] A name taken simply as an illustration.

self-effulgent in the Heart as 'I-I'. Through your keen intellect, know this eternal blissful awareness to be the Self or 'I'. The fool takes the reflection of the sun in the water of a pot to be the sun; the wise man eliminates pot, water, and reflection and knows the sun in the sky as it really is, single and unaffected, but illuminating all three. In the same way the fool, through error and misperception, identifies himself with the ego and its reflected light experienced through the medium of the intellect. The wise and discriminating man eliminates body, intellect, and reflected light of consciousness, and probes deeply into his real Self which illuminates all three, while remaining uniform in the ether of the Heart. Thereby he realizes the eternal witness which is absolute knowledge, illuminating all. It is subtle and all-pervasive, neither being nor non-being, with neither inside nor outside, and is self-effulgent. Realizing this, he is set free from the impurities of the ego. He has no more birth or death. He is free from sorrow and becomes the immutable essence of established Bliss. The *jnani* who, through experience, has realized his Self to be the *Brahman* as it really is, as Truth, Knowledge, endless Bliss, the single essence, eternal, boundless, pure, unattached, and indivisible, not only does not return to bondage but is that *Brahman* itself, the *advaita*. That is to say that knowledge of the identity of *Brahman* and Self is the prime cause of release from bondage. For him who aspires after liberation there is no other way of release from bondage but knowledge of the identity of *Brahman* and Self. Therefore you too, by your own experience, know your Self as always 'I am *Brahman*', '*Brahman* am I', '*Brahman* alone am I'.

"Since there is nothing other than *Brahman*, it is the supreme *advaita*. The pot which is made of clay, has no other form than that of the clay. No one can show the pot except by means of the clay. The pot is only a delusion of the imagination

and exists only in name, since it has no other reality than that of the clay. Similarly the whole universe is a superimposition (of form) on the *Brahman* although it seems to be separate from it. The substratum of *Brahman* appears through the delusion of the superimposition. The latter is really nonexistent, like the serpent seen in the rope. The manifest is only an illusion. The silver seen in the substratum of the mother-of-pearl has no existence apart from it but is the mother-of-pearl itself. Similarly, manifestation has no existence apart from its substratum of *Brahman.* Whatever, oh *sadhu*, appears to the deluded as the manifested world of names and forms, on account of their ignorance and wrong knowledge, whatever objectivity appears as real, all this, when truly realized as it is, is the effect of *Brahman*, and is superimposed on the substratum of *Brahman.* Only owing to delusion it appears to be real and it is *Brahman,* its substratum, which appears to be superimposed on it. Really all these names and forms are nothing at all. They are a myth pure and simple and have no existence apart from their substratum of *Brahman.* They are nothing but the Being-Consciousness-Bliss which neither rises nor sets. If it were contended that the manifested world has any existence apart from *Brahman*, that would impair the infinity of *Brahman.* It would also contradict the authority of the *Atharva Veda* which declares in unequivocal terms 'All this world is indeed *Brahman*'. It would also make out the omniscient Lord as having uttered a falsehood when He said: 'All these elements are not in Me. I, the Indivisible Whole, am not in them'. The *mahatmas*, who are true *sadhus*, would not countenance these contradictions. Furthermore, the outer world does not exist in the state of deep sleep, and, if investigated, it is seen to be unreal, like the dream world. Therefore any such statement made by fools as that the manifested world has its own existence apart from its

substratum of *Brahman*, is as false as the idle words of a man talking in his sleep. It is *Brahman* itself which shines everywhere, uniform and complete. This truth the enlightened *(jnanis)* know as the One without a second, formless, inactive, unmanifest, never to be destroyed, having no beginning or end. It is Truth, absolute purity, the essence of pure Bliss. It contains none of the internal differences which are the creation of *maya*. It is eternal, continuous, immaculately pure, spotless, nameless, undifferentiated, self-effulgent, beyond the triads of knower-knowledge-known, absolute, pure, unbroken Consciousness, ever-shining.

"My beloved disciple, this Self can neither be held nor given up. It is beyond perception and utterance. It is immeasurable without beginning or end. This infinity of *Brahman* is my Self and yours and that of other individuals. Great texts such as 'That thou art' reveal the identity between the *Brahman* known as 'That' and the individual known as 'thou'. The identity is not shown by the literal meaning of 'that' and 'thou'. The literal meaning of 'that' is *Ishvara's maya* which is the cause of the universe, and the literal meaning of 'thou' is the five sheaths of the ego. These are nonexistent superimpositions, the cause and effect of nonexistent phantoms. Their qualities are opposite to each other, like the sun and the glowworm, the king and the slave, the ocean and the well, Mount Meru and the atom. There can be no identity between *Brahman* and the individual in the literal sense of 'that' and 'thou', and it is not in this way that the scriptures postulate the identity.

[The science of the secondary meaning of words is called *lakshana* and is of three kinds. The first is called *jahat-ajahat-lakshana*. In the first, the primary sense of a term is rejected and the secondary retained; in the second, the

primary sense is retained and the secondary rejected; in the third, the primary sense is only partly rejected and partly retained.][3] Of these three, we can omit the first two as being of no use for our purpose and take the third. According to this, in a text such as 'He is that Devadatta' we eliminate the contradictory aspects of Devadatta manifested at different places and times, and concentrate on the identity of Devadatta himself irrespective of place and time. Similarly, in the text in question, we eliminate the nonexistent, objective, contradictory attributes of 'that' and 'thou' as 'not this, not this' (am I). You can do this on the authority of the Vedas which reject the duality superimposed on *Brahman*, and also by your own intelligence. If attributes such as a shield for a royal person and a badge of ownership for a slave are removed, both alike belong to the genus man. Similarly the text (about 'that' and 'thou') declares the natural identity between *Ishvara* and the individual in their residuary aspect of Consciousness apart from the forms of *Ishvara* and individual. There is no contradiction in this, since Consciousness is the unbroken, single essence of both. Through the touch of the *mahatmas*, know this blessed identity of *Brahman* and Self by rejecting as 'not I' the nonexistent body. Know by your own clear intellect that *Brahman* is your Self, self-existent, subtle as the ether, ever radiant, true, awareness, bliss, indivisible and whole.

"Truly 'thou art That', the Self that is non-dual *Brahman*, pure and exquisitely serene, the Truth apart from which nothing is. This is so because, even in this waking state, the world and the body with its sense and the ego which, owing to ignorance, seems to be separate from the Self, and the life breath are pure myth. 'Thou art That' because in the dream

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[3] This passage in brackets is inserted by the editor.

state, time, space and objects and the knower of them are all created by sleep and are purely illusory. 'Thou art That' because this whole world emanates from *Brahman*, which alone IS, and is *Brahman* itself, just as pots come from clay and are clay itself and indeed are made of clay. That *Brahman* is untouched by the sixfold changes of birth, youth, growth, old age, decay, and death. It has no caste or custom, tribe or family, name or form. It is without attributes. It has neither merit nor demerit, neither mental nor physical afflictions. It is free from the six evils of hunger, thirst, sorrow, delusion, old age and death. It has no time, space or objectivity. It cannot be described by words. The gross mind cannot reach it. It can be comprehended only by the eye of wisdom and experienced in the Heart of the *yogi*, in his very being, not by the use of any organ. It is the substratum of the illusory world that seems to be superimposed on it. It is the cause of the emanation, preservation, and reabsorption of the world. It is the supreme cause, which itself has no cause; all the worlds of name and form are its effects, and yet it is distinct from cause and effect. It is distinct from being and non-being. Although, owing to delusion, it appears like gold in its varying aspects of name and form and its modifications, yet it has no name or form, no attributes or modifications. It contains no disequilibrium. It is still, like a waveless ocean. It is eternal, formless, spotless, incomparable, ever free, indestructible, pure, without beginning. It is that beyond which there is nothing. It is complete, not compounded of elements or of parts. It is Being-Consciousness-Bliss, uniform, indivisible Bliss. It is single in essence. That *Brahman* which is all this, 'That thou art'. Meditate on the truth of this in your Heart continuously, without break, calmly, with reason and keen intellect. Thus you will obtain essential knowledge free from doubt, as clear as water in the palm of the hand. Knowledge in the body with

its faculties is like a king in the midst of his vast army, and that knowledge is the Self and is *Brahman*. Know this by discrimination. Regard all other separate things as This Itself and remain ever as this Self. Thus remaining, you will attain Bliss and peace of Being.

"In the cavity of the intellect is the single truth of *Brahman*, distinct from being and non-being. He who remains eternally as that Truth itself is never drawn back again to birth in the body.

"Although a man knows this to be true, the feeling of 'I am the doer', 'I am the enjoyer' arises strongly in him owing to the bondage *(samsara)* caused by the mighty, beginningless *vasanas* (innate tendencies) which often obstruct him. Curb these tendencies the moment they arise, by your own efforts, by abiding firmly in the Self, by a vision of the Self. Sages such as Vasishta have declared that the withering of the *vasanas* is indeed liberation. Realization of the Self as it is does not come through tendencies to worldly or sense activity or through prolonged study of the scriptures. To those who seek deliverance from the prison or ocean of *samsara*, the above threefold tendencies are iron fetters, say those who are realized. Therefore attachment to the world, the scriptures, and the body must be given up and it must be fully realized that the body is sustained by the force of *prarabdha* (past *karma*). You should, therefore, courageously renounce these attachments and strive energetically to overcome *tamas* by the power of *sattva* and *rajas*, then *rajas* through mixed *sattva*, then mixed *sattva* through pure *sattva*. You should do this with a firm and calm mind, helped by the great texts such as 'That thou art' which proclaim the identity between the individual self and *Brahman*. Seek by reasoning and experience to get rid of the *vasanas*, so that you may have

firm faith in *Brahman* and completely root out from the body and senses, the feeling of 'I' and 'mine' which constantly appears as a result of the superimposition. This is to be done by firm abidance in the one indivisible Self in the Heart and by meditating on the unceasing experience of knowledge of the unity of *Brahman* and Self thus: 'I am not the ego. I am the unceasing perfection of *Brahman* experienced as I, the witness of thought forms.' This meditation must be persisted in until the ego sense is completely rooted out from the body without a vestige, and the world of individuals appears like a dream. He who meditates has no work to do except beg and perform his natural functions. He must never forget the Self by giving room for worldly speech and sense objects. Sandalwood is fragrant by nature, but its fragrance is masked by a bad smell when it comes into contact with water and is revealed when it is rubbed. Constant practice of meditation is this rubbing. The latent tendencies of the mind are removed, only to the extent to which it abides in the Self. It is by such constant abidance in the Self that the mind of the *yogi* is destroyed. And by the destruction of the mind the outer non-self tendencies of the Heart are utterly eradicated. Then the experience of the supreme Self, which was formerly veiled by the magic of the *vasanas*, shines forth of its own accord like the fragrance of uncontaminated sandal-paste.

"In whatever way it may be examined, the ego with all its faculties turns out to be unreal, a momentary limitation, inert, insentient and incapable of realizing the One. The Supreme Self is different from both gross and subtle bodies. It is the witness of the ego with its faculties and exists always, even in deep sleep. The texts say: 'It is birthless and deathless.' It is immutable and distinct alike from being and non-being. The ego can never be the real Self, the true meaning of 'I'. Keep aloof from this impure body as you would from an outcast.

Give up the sense of 'I' in the gross body and all attachment due to the mind, attachments to name and form, tribe and family, caste and social order. Give up also the attachment to the subtle body and its nature and sense of being the doer. Find the feeling of 'I' in the Self, which is Truth, knowledge, and eternity. Just as the air in a pot is part of the air outside, so conceive of the Self as that self-effulgent *Brahman* which is the substratum of all, in which the world is seen reflected like a city in a mirror or like shadows cast. Think of yourself as 'That I am', without parts, without form, without activity, without duality, unending, Being-Consciousness-Bliss. Know the Self as it really is. Give up this false physical self just as an actor gives up his role and remains himself. By knowledge acquired through Self-enquiry discard both microcosm and macrocosm as unreal and, abiding in the unbroken stillness, remain ever at rest in the perfect Bliss as unqualified *Brahman.* Thus obtain supreme peace, which is the purpose of life.

"Though various obstacles contribute to the bondage of the soul, the primary cause of them all is the rising of the false ego-sense. It is through the superimposition of the ego on the Self that this bondage of birth, death and sorrow has come upon you who are by nature Being-Consciousness-Bliss, of boundless glory, eternal, single in essence, unchanging. By nature you have no such bondage. Just as there can be no sound health so long as the effect of a little poison in the body continues, so there can be no liberation so long as identification with the ego continues. Knowledge of the identity of the self with *Brahman* is clearly revealed as soon as the ego is completely destroyed without residue, together with the illusion of multiplicity caused by the veiling of *tamas*. Therefore, by investigation into the nature of the unattached Self, discover the Truth of your own Self, complete, perfect, self-effulgent and ever-blissful. He who is freed from the ego

shines eternally as the Self, like the full moon, radiant when delivered from the dragon's head (of eclipse). In the field of the Heart the terrible cobra of the ego is coiled round the Bliss of the Self to which it denies access with the threefold hood of the *gunas.* These three fearful heads of the serpent of ego are to be severed, in accordance with the scriptures, only by great courage with the mighty sword of actual experience of the Self. He who has thus destroyed the three-hooded serpent can obtain and enjoy the vast treasure of the Bliss of *Brahman.* Therefore you, too, give up the 'I-sense' in the ego, which appears like being and assumes that it is the doer, whereas it is only the reflected light of the Self. Turn inwards all the thought-forms that adhere to the ego. He is an enemy of yours, so kill him with the sword of knowledge. He has been harming you like a thorn in your throat while eating. Give up all desires in order to realize your state as the Supreme Self. Enjoy the kingdom of the Self, be perfect, be still in the stillness of the immutable state of *Brahman.*

"The ego may in this way be killed, but if thought is given to it even for a moment it revives and engages in activity, driving a man before it as the wind drives winter clouds. Remember that he who associates the 'I-sense' with the body and its faculties is bound while he who does not is liberated.

"Thoughts of sense objects create a sense of differentiation and thereby cause the bondage of birth and death. Therefore no quarter should be given to the ego, who is the enemy who has such thoughts. Just as a withered lime tree puts out new leaves if watered, so the ego revives through thoughts of sense objects. The increase of effects makes their seed or cause flourish, while the decay of effects destroys their cause also; therefore you should first destroy the effects. If thoughts, which are the effect, flourish, the ego with its tendencies,

which is the cause, also flourishes. From thoughts, outer activities arise, and from these two together the tendencies develop and create the bondage to which souls are subject. In order to escape from this, thoughts, activity, and tendencies must all three be abolished. The best way of doing this is to hold firmly to the view that 'All this that appears as separate names and forms is *Brahman* itself.' This view must be held to at all times and places and in all states. Firm holding to this attitude reduces activity, and this results in a decline of thoughts, which in turn destroys the latent tendencies. Destruction of the latent tendencies is indeed deliverance. Therefore develop this helpful tendency to regard everything as *Brahman*. The result will be that the frail tendencies of the ego will disappear like darkness before the sun. Just as darkness with all its dismal effects disappears before the rising sun, so bondage with all its sorrows will pass away without a trace when the sun of *advaitic* experience rises. Therefore regard all objective manifestation as *Brahman* and hold firm in a state of peace *(samadhi)* and inner and outer beatitude (*nischala bhava*) as long as the bondage due to your past destiny (karma) lasts. While doing so, always remember: 'That immovable Bliss of *Brahman* itself am I.'

"This abidance as *Brahman* must never be relaxed, for if it is, a false notion of Truth will result which is indeed death, as says Bhagavan Sri Sanatsujata, the son of Brahma. Such a false notion of truth due to swerving from the state of abidance in Truth introduces delusion; from delusion arises the attribution of 'I' to the ego and its objects, from this bondage, and from bondage sorrow. Therefore there is no greater misfortune for the enlightened than wrong understanding and swerving from reality. Just as water plants, though removed from a pool of water, do not stay at the side but cover it over again, so if a man is exteriorized, even though he may be

enlightened, if *maya* (illusion) once begins to shroud him he will be swayed in numerous ways by the false intellect. This is due to his lapse from watchfulness, his forgetting of his true state, his going out towards sense objects. He is like a man swayed and dominated by a lewd woman, of whom he is enamoured. If, through wrong understanding and swerving from reality, a man's consciousness slips even the least bit from the target of his own Self, it will enter into outer things and leap from one to another as a ball slips from your hand and rolls down a flight of stairs. It will begin to consider outer experiences good for it and thence will arise the desire to enjoy them. That will lead to participation in them, which in turn will destroy his abidance in the Self, with the result that he will sink into depths from which he can never more arise and will be destroyed. Therefore there is no greater danger in *Brahman*-consciousness than wrong understanding, which means swerving from one's true state. Only he who has the eternal state of consciousness (*nishta*) obtains realization *(siddhi)* and so renounces the manifestation *(sankalpa)* born of *pramada* (wrong understanding) and of relaxation from practice. Such wrong understanding is the cause of all spiritual decline *(anartha)*. Therefore be the *swarupa nishta* who abides ever in the Self.

"He who has attained liberation in the state of *Brahman* while still alive will shine so in his bodiless state also. It says in the Yajur Veda: 'He who has even the slightest sense of differentiation is always afraid!' He who sees any attributes of differentiation, however small, in the absolute *Brahman*, will for that reason remain in a state of terror. He who locates the 'I-sense' in the insentient body and its objects, so despised by the various scriptures and their commentaries, will experience sorrow after sorrow like the sinner who commits unlawful acts. We can see from the discrimination between

thieves and honest men that he who is devoted to truth escapes misfortune and achieves success, while he who is devoted to falsehood perishes.[4] We also see that shutting out external objects gives the mind a clear perception of the Self, which in turn results in the destruction of the bondage of *samsara.* Therefore the abandonment of all objective reality is the way to deliverance. If a man discriminates between Truth and non-truth in quest of liberation and discovers the Truth of the supreme Lord through the authority of the scriptures, will he then, like a child, run after nonexistent chimera, knowing them to be the cause of his destruction? None would do so. Therefore he who discriminates must also renounce and cease to seek after externals which feed those lower tendencies that cause bondage. He should erase all sorrows due to ignorance by the experience 'I am that Supreme *Brahman* alone, which is Being-Consciousness-Bliss' and should abide ever in his true state, which is Bliss. One who is in the waking state is not dreaming and one who is in the dream state is not awake; the two are mutually exclusive. Similarly, one who is not attached to the body has deliverance and one who is has not.

"A liberated being is one who sees himself as single and the witness both within and without the world of things moving and unmoving, as the substratum of all. By his universal consciousness experienced through the subtle mind, he has removed all the vehicles and he remains as the absolute whole. Only such a one is liberated, and he has no attachment to the body. There is no other means of liberation than this blessed realization that 'All is one Self'. And this 'All is one' attitude is to be obtained by perpetual abidance in the Self and rejection of objects without attachment to them. How can a man reject

[4] This refers to trial by ordeal, placing a hot iron in the hand of a suspected thief, who is burnt if guilty but not if innocent.

objective reality if he has the 'I am the body' idea and is attached to outer things and always performing actions dictated by them? It is impossible. Therefore renounce all actions based on *karma* and *dharma* and, with knowledge of the *tattva*, abide permanently in the Self. Prepare your mind for immersion in perpetual Bliss. This effort will enable you to reject objective reality. It is in order to obtain this *sarvatma bhava* (attitude that all is the Self) that the scriptural text *'Shanto dantha'* (calm and self-controlled) prescribes *nirvikalpa samadhi* (ecstatic trance) for those seekers who have taken a vow of *Chandrayana* (regulation of the increase and decrease of food intake through two successive fortnights) and have also performed *sravana* (hearing of the text 'That thou art'). A scholar who has not had a firm experience of *nirvikalpa samadhi*, however learned he may be, will not be capable of destroying the ego and its objective reality together with all the accumulated tendencies of his previous births.

"It is the projecting power of *maya* together with its veiling power which unites the soul with the ego, the cause of delusion, and, through its qualities, keeps a man vainly dangling like a ghost. If the veiling power is destroyed the Self will shine of itself, and there will be no room either for doubt or obstruction. Then the projecting power also will vanish, or even if it persists, its persistence will only be apparent. But the projecting power cannot disappear unless the veiling power does. Only when the subject is perfectly distinguished from objects, like milk from water, will the veiling power be destroyed.

"Pure discrimination born of perfect knowledge distinguishes the subject from the object and destroys the delusion due to ignorance. The man of discrimination distinguishes the real from the unreal, reasoning as follows:

‘Like iron combining with fire, the intellect combines with ignorance to obtain a fictitious unity with the Self which is Being, and projects itself as the world of seer, sight, and seen. Therefore all these appearances are false, like a delusion, dream or imagination. All sense objects from the ego down to the body are also unreal, being modifications of *prakriti*, subject to change from moment to moment. Only the Self never changes. The Self, distinct from the body, distinct from being and non-being, the witness of the intellect and the meaning implied by the ‘I-sense’, single, eternal, indivisible, is indeed the Supreme Self of eternal Bliss incarnate.’

“In this way he discriminates between Truth and untruth and, in doing so, discovers the true Self. With the eye of illumination, he obtains actual realization of the Self and experiences this ‘I’ as the indivisible knowledge of absolute *Brahman*. Thereby he destroys the veiling power and the false knowledge and other sorrows that have been created by the projecting power, just as the fear of a snake falls away as soon as one perceives the reality of the rope (that one took to be a snake). Being freed from these ills, he obtains abidance in a state of perfect peace. Thus, only when one obtains realization of the supreme identity through *nirvikalpa samadhi* will ignorance be destroyed without vestige and the knot of the Heart loosed. How can there be any seed of *samsara* still remaining in the liberated soul who has realized the supreme identity with the utter destruction of the forest of ignorance by the fire of knowledge of oneness of Self and *Brahman*? He has no more *samsara,* no more rebirth and death. Therefore the discriminating soul must know the *atma tattva* in order to be freed from the bondage of *samsara*.

“All forms of creation and imagination appearing as you, I, this, etc., are a result of the impurity of the intellect. They

seem to exist in the absolute, attributeless supreme Self, but in the state of absorption (*samadhi*) and experience of *Brahman* they cease to exist. Also the Self seems to be divisible owing to differences in the vehicles, but if these are removed it shines single and complete. Perpetual concentration is necessary in order to dissolve these differentiations in the Absolute. The wasp's grub that renounces all activity and meditates constantly upon the wasp becomes a wasp, and in the same way the soul that longs for *Brahman* with one-pointed meditation becomes the Supreme Self through the power of its meditation and perpetual abidance in *Brahman*, in the absolute stillness. So persevere constantly in meditation on *Brahman*, and as a result the mind will be cleansed of the stain of the three *gunas* until it becomes perfectly pure and resumes its state, when it is ripe for dissolution in *Brahman* like salt in water. It is like gold being cleansed of its alloy and returning to the purity of its true state through being put in a furnace. Only in such purity of mind can *nirvikalpa samadhi* be obtained, and therewith the essential bliss of identity. Through this *samadhi* all the knots of the *vasanas* are loosened and all past *karmas* destroyed so that the Light of the Self is experienced without effort, inwardly and outwardly, and at all places and times. Thus the subtle *Brahman* is experienced in the single and subtle mental mode of *samadhi* by those of subtle intellect, and in no other way, by no gross outlook, can it be experienced. Similarly the sage who has inner and outer senses controlled, in Solitude and equanimity, obtains experience of the all-pervading Self through perpetual concentration and thus, getting rid of all mental creations caused by the darkness of ignorance, becomes actionless and without attributes and remains eternally in the Bliss of *Brahman* himself. Only he is liberated from the bondage of *samsara* who, having obtained *nirvikalpa samadhi*,

perceives the mind, senses, and objects, the ears and sound, etc., to inhere in the Self, and not he who speaks only from theoretical wisdom. *Brahman* can be clearly experienced without any barrier only through *nirvikalpa samadhi*, for apart from that the mental mode always fluctuates, leading from one thought to another. Therefore control the senses and mind and abide firmly in the Self. Utterly destroy the darkness of ignorance and its cause through experience of the one Self and abide ever as the Self. Reflection on truth heard is a hundred times more potent than hearing it, and abiding in it is a hundred thousand times more potent than reflection on it. What limit, then, can there be to the potency obtained through *nirvikalpa samadhi?*

"Restraint of speech, not accepting anything from others, conquest of desire, renunciation of action, continence, and Solitude are all aids in the early stages of this *samadhi* yoga. Solitude helps to quieten the senses, and thereby the mind also. Stillness of mind destroys the tendencies and thereby gives perpetual experience of the essential Bliss of *Brahman*. Therefore the *yogi* must always exert himself to restrain the mind. The breathing must subside into the mind, the mind into the intellect, the intellect into the witness, and by knowing the witness as the fullness of the unqualified Supreme Self perfect peace is obtained.

"He who meditates becomes that aspect of his being to which the consciousness is drawn; if to the body, he becomes body, if to the senses he becomes senses, if to the life-breath, he becomes that, if to the mind or intellect, he becomes mind or intellect. Therefore, rejecting all these, the consciousness should subside and obtain peace in *Brahman*, which is eternal Bliss.

"He who, through desire for liberation, has attained perfect freedom from desires is able to abide in the Self and get rid of

all attachments, inner as well as outer, and he alone achieves inner and outer renunciation. Moreover, it is only he who is without desires, who has perfect non-attachment and so obtains *samadhi* and through *samadhi* the certainty that he has won to *tattva jnana*, which brings liberation. He who has attained liberation has attained eternal Bliss. Therefore complete non-attachment is the only path for him who aspires to the bliss of union with the bride of liberation. Non-attachment combined with Self-knowledge wins the kingdom of deliverance. Non-attachment and knowledge are like the wings of a bird needed for ascending the mount of deliverance, and if either of them is lacking it cannot be attained. Therefore renounce the desire for things, which is like poison; give up attachment to caste, group, social position, and destiny, cease to locate the 'I-sense' in the body; be ever centred upon the Self; for in truth you are the witness, the stainless *Brahman*.

"The Self in the form of *Brahman*, witness of all finite beings, self-effulgent, shines eternally as 'I-I' in the sheath of *vijnana*, distinct from the five sheaths. Being experienced as 'I', it shines as the true form of the Self, the direct experience of the great texts. Fix your Heart constantly on this *Brahman*, which is the goal. Let the senses remain in their centres, keep the body steady by remaining indifferent to it; and practise the meditation 'I am *Brahman*, *Brahman* am I,' allowing no other thoughts to come in. Gradually still the mind by practice of the unbroken flow of beatitude. Realize the identity of Self and *Brahman* and drink the nectar of *Brahman* Bliss in eternal joy. What use are base thoughts of body and world, which are non-Self? Give up these non-Self thoughts, which are the cause of all sorrow. Hold firm to the Self, the seat of Bliss, as 'I' and no longer ascribe the 'I-sense' to the ego and its attributes. Be absolutely indifferent to them and meditate perpetually on the Self, which is the cause of liberation.

"A pot, a huge earthen jar for storing grain, and a needle are all separate things, but when they are cast away there remains only the single expanse of ether. Something which is falsely imagined to exist on the substratum of something else has no reality apart from the real thing, just as a snake imagined in a piece of rope has not. Wave, foam, bubble, and whirlpool if examined are all found to be simply water. Pots of various sizes and shapes are nothing other than clay, and in fact are clay. Similarly, you should reject the limitations of body, senses, life-breath, mind, and ego, which are merely illusory. Only fools perceive and speak of 'I', 'you', 'it' and so forth out of delusion and folly, being drunk with the wine of illusion *(maya)*. Even their perception of multiplicity is contained in Being-Consciousness-Bliss, in the perfect purity of Self which, as *Brahman*, shines as one indivisible whole, like the vast ether. All superimpositions such as body and ego-sense, from *Brahman* down to a boulder, which are perceived as the world, are really nothing other than the one Self. They are merely the display of *prakriti* and the Self as pure Being. The one supreme Self, unbroken and homogeneous, exists as east, west, south and north, inner and outer, up and down, everywhere. He himself is Brahma; he himself is Vishnu, Siva, Indra, gods and men, and everything. What more is there to say? Everything from (the threefold appearance of) personal God, individual being, and world down to the minutest atom is merely a form of *Brahman*. In order to remove the superimposition of *mithya* (the false), the scriptures declare 'there is no duality at all' (*Brahman* is one without a second); therefore you yourself are the non-dual *Brahman*, spotless like the ether, without inner or outer, without attributes, changeless, timeless, without dimensions or parts. What else is there to know? The scriptures declare: 'So long as the individual regards the corpse of his body as 'I' he is impure

and subject to various ills such as birth, death and sickness. Remove all objective reality superimposed on the Self by illusion and know yourself as pure, immutable Siva; then you will become liberated, the *Brahman* which is without action and is indivisible perfection.' The enlightened who have attained supreme knowledge shine as Being-Consciousness-Bliss, homogeneous *Brahman*, having utterly renounced objective reality. Therefore you too, reject your gross, impure body and the subtle body that wavers like the wind and the 'I-sense' in them and regard yourself as Being-Consciousness-Bliss, as declared by *Vedanta*, and thus remain forever as the very *Brahman*.

"The scriptures declare that: 'Duality is of the nature of illusion *(maya)* and only non-duality is the Supreme Truth.' It is our experience that the diversity created by the consciousness ceases to exist in deep sleep in which the consciousness is absorbed in bliss. Those who are wise and discriminating know that the proverbial serpent has no existence apart from the substratum of the rope, nor the water of a mirage apart from the barren ground. It is our experience that when the mentality assumes the nature of the Self and becomes one with the attributeless supreme Self, mental manifestation ceases. All these magical creations which the illusion of the mind sets forth as the universe are found to have no real existence and become untrue when the Truth behind them is realized as *Brahman* itself. In the non-dual *Brahman* the threefold reality of seer, sight, and seen does not exist. It is the substratum into which ignorance, the root cause of the illusion of multiplicity, is absorbed, like darkness into light. Like oceans that endure to the end of the cycle of time, the Truth of *Brahman* remains single, complete, absolute purity, inactive, unqualified, changeless, formless. Where, then, can be talk of duality or diversity in the homogeneity of

Brahman? When in a state of *samadhi,* the enlightened *jnani* experiences in the Heart as 'I-I' the homogeneous completeness of that *Brahman* which is eternal, the bliss of knowledge incomparable, unattached, formless, inactive, unqualified, immutable, characterless, nameless, and free from bondage. It is still, like the ether — and yet nothing can be compared to it. It has no cause and is not an effect. It is beyond imagining. It is to be achieved only through realization on the authority of the *Vedanta.* The truth of it abides in the Heart and is experienced constantly as I. It is free from birth, old age, and death. In itself it is eternal. It is eternal, tranquil, and undifferentiated; it is vast and still like a calm ocean without a shore. In order not to fall back into *samsara*, practise *nirvikalpa samadhi* by concentration on *Brahman,* which is experienced in the Heart as our own radiant Self, free from all limitations and as Being-Consciousness-Bliss. This will destroy the individual consciousness which is the cause of all error, and thus you can unravel the knot of the Heart which causes the ills of birth and death. Thus will you obtain the glory of unbroken bliss, being Self-realized, and by doing so achieve the purpose of human life, a boon so rare to obtain.

"The Self-realized *yogi,* knowing his true nature, the great *mahatma,* shows his wisdom by rejecting his body, regarding it as a corpse, as the mere shadow of his being, existing only owing to past destiny. Such a great *mahatma* knows himself to be the unbroken bliss of the Self. He has utterly consumed the body and its attributes in the fire of *Brahman,* which is eternal, immutable Truth. Having thus consumed his body and remaining with his consciousness ever immersed in the ocean of bliss which is *Brahman,* he himself is eternal Knowledge and Bliss. How then should he care to nourish or sustain his body or be attached to it, feeding as he does on the eternal nectar of *Brahman,* inwardly and outwardly? Just as

the cow does not care about the garland round its neck, so too he does not care whether the body, bound by the strings of past *karma*, lives or dies. So you too reject this inert, impure body and realize the pure and eternal Self of wisdom. Give no more thought to the body. Who would care to take back what he has once vomited?

"Knowledge of a mirage keeps one away from it, and ignorance that it is a mirage leads one to seek it. Similarly, knowledge leads to the path of release and ignorance leads to worldly pursuits. The achievement of Self-knowledge or Self-realization frees a man from the ills arising from error and brings him eternal contentedness and unequalled bliss eternally experienced; ignorance, on the other hand, pushes him into objective experience of error and misery. How then should the wise man, who has severed the knot of the Heart with the sword of wisdom, continue to perform the various vain actions which occupied him during the time of his delusion? What cause could induce him to activity?

"Knowledge leads to non-attachment; Solitude and abandonment of home lead to knowledge; the bliss of Self-experience and tranquillity results from cessation of activity. If these results are not obtained step by step, the previous steps become invalid. The perfection of non-attachment is when previous tendencies to seek enjoyment no longer arise. The perfection of knowledge is when the 'I-sense' no longer pertains to the body. The perfection of Solitude is when thoughts subside through perpetual striving and, dissolving in *Brahman*, no longer turn outwards.

"Do not differentiate between Self and *Brahman* or between world and *Brahman*. On the authority of the Vedas realize 'I am *Brahman'*. Attain the pure beatitude of oneness and establish the pure consciousness immovably in *Brahman* so

that you become dissolved in *Brahman*. Being ever *Brahman*, renounce objective reality and let your enjoyments be witnessed or known by others, like the state of sleeping children. Renounce activity and, with the purity of primal Being, abide in eternal enjoyment of pure Bliss. Although your mind is dissolved and you are like one forgetful of the world, remain ever awake, and yet like one who is not awake. Remain indifferent to the body and senses and outer things that follow you like a shadow. Be one who discriminates, free from the stain of *samsara* and from tendencies and sense objects. Retain consciousness without thought. Retain form, though formless. Have no likes and dislikes in what is experienced at the moment and no thought of what may happen in the future. Give up all thought of inner and outer and concentrate permanently on the blissful experience of *Brahman*. Through the power of knowledge maintain perfect equanimity in the face of all opposites such as vice and virtue, likes and dislikes, or praise and blame whether by *sadhus* or by the wicked. The dedicated sage is like a river emptied into the ocean, untouched by the attack of sense objects, absorbed in the Self, and it is only such a one who attains realization while still in the body. He alone is worshipful and reaps the reward of worthy actions. All his innate tendencies have been destroyed by his knowledge of identity with *Brahman* and no renewal of *samsara* can be ascribed to him. Just as even the most lustful person never thinks of enjoying his own mother, so the sage who experiences the perfection of *Brahman* never turns back to *samsara*. If he does, then he is not a sage who has known *Brahman* but only an outward-turning fool.

"Identity with *Brahman* is the fire of knowledge which burns up *sanchita karma* (destiny stored up for future lives) and *agami karma* (destiny being created in this life). *Sanchita karma* is destroyed because it can no longer cause birth in higher or lower

worlds once the sage has awakened from the illusion of activity in which he harvested merit and demerit through countless ages. And *agami karma* can no longer affect him because he knows himself to be established as the Supreme *Brahman*, indifferent as the ether to the effects of *karma*. There is ether in a pot containing alcohol, but is it affected by the smell of the alcohol? Not at all. Having spoken of the *sanchita* and *agami karmas* of the sage, it now remains to explain how his *prarabdha karma* (that part of past *karma* which is to be experienced in this life) is also a myth. Although ever absorbed in his true state, he is sometimes seen to experience the fruits of his past actions or to take part in outer activity; so people say that he is not free from *karma* since he must reap the good and bad effects of past action. Does not the rule that there is fruit of past action where there is destiny and no fruit where there is no destiny apply to the sage also? They argue: if one shoots an arrow at an animal, thinking it to be a tiger, but it later turns out to be a cow, can the arrow be recalled? Once shot, it will certainly have to kill the cow. So too, they say, destiny that started on its course prior to the dawn of enlightenment must produce its effects, so that the sage is still subject to *prarabdha karma* only and must experience its effects. However, the scriptures declare such *prarabdha* to be unreal, because a man who has awakened from a dream experience does not go back into the same dream, or desire to cling to the dream experiences or the body and environment of the dream as 'I' and 'mine'. He is perfectly free from the dream world and happy in his awakened state, whereas a man who retains any attachment to the dream cannot be said to have left the state of sleep. In the same way, one who has realized the identity of *Brahman* and Self sees nothing else. He eats and excretes but as though in a dream. He is beyond all limitations and associations. He is the absolute *Brahman* itself. The three kinds of *karma* do not affect him in the least, so how can one say that only *prarabdha karma*

affects him? Is one who has awakened still dreaming? Even if it were said that *prarabdha karma* affects the sage's body, which has been constructed from the result of past *karma*, that would only affect him so long as he had the 'I am the body' idea, but once that is gone, *prarabdha* cannot be attributed to him, since he is the Self, not born of *karma*, beginningless, pure, and described by the scriptures as 'unborn, eternal, and deathless'. But to attribute *prarabdha* to the body, which is unreal and a figment of illusion, is itself an illusion. How can an illusion be born, live, and die as reality? It may be asked why, then, should the scriptures refer to a nonexistence *prarabdha?* It may also be asked how the body can continue to exist through knowledge after the death of ignorance and its effects. To those who are so misguided and under the influence of false ideas, the explanation is given that the scriptures admit that the sage has illusory *prarabdha* only as a concession for the sake of argument and not to postulate that the sage has a body and faculties. In him is visible the eternally established state of non-dual *Brahman*, beyond mental or verbal description and definition, without beginning or end, integral Being-Consciousness-Bliss, stabilized, homogeneous, never to be rejected or obtained, subtle, inwardly and outwardly complete, with no substratum, beyond the *gunas*, without colour, form, or change, as pure Being. Nothing at all is to be seen there of what obtains here. It is only by knowledge of this oneness in the Heart through *atma* yoga, by renouncing enjoyment and the very desire for enjoyment, that dedicated sages who have peace and self-control obtain supreme deliverance.

"Therefore, my son, if you too, by the eye of wisdom obtained through unwavering *samadhi*, discover beyond all doubt the supreme Self of perfect bliss which is your original nature, you will no longer have any doubts about what you have heard. Cast out, therefore, the delusion created by the

mind and become a sage, a realized man who has attained the purpose of life. The teacher, like the scriptures, gives instructions common to all, but each person must experience bondage and deliverance, hunger and satisfaction, sickness and health for himself; others can only infer it from him. Similarly, he who discriminates must cross the ocean of birth and death by his own efforts through the grace of the Supreme Lord. Thus obtaining release from bondage, which is due only to ignorance, remain as Being-Consciousness-Bliss. The scriptures, reason, the words of the guru, and inner experience are the means you have to use for this.

"The essence of the *Vedantic* scriptures may be condensed into the following points:

"First: In me, the unmoving *Brahman*, all that seems different is utterly without reality. I alone am. This is called the standpoint of elimination *(bedha drishti).*

"Second: The dream and all else that appears in me as the result of magic is an illusion. I alone am the Truth. This is called the standpoint of illusion *(mithya drishti).*

"Third: All that appears as form apart from the sea, that is the bubble and the wave, is the sea. All that is seen in a dream is seen in him who sees the dream. Similarly, in me as in the ocean or the man who dreams, all that seems separate from me is myself. This is called the standpoint of resolving (the effect into its cause) *(pravilapa drishti).*

"Reject the outer world by any of these three means and recognize him who sees it to be infinite, pure, homogeneous *Brahman*, who is the Self. He who has thus realized *Brahman* is liberated. Although all three of these viewpoints are aids to realization, the third, in which one conceives everything as one's own Self, is the most powerful. Therefore, knowing the

indivisible Self to be one's own Self, by one's own experience, one must abide in one's own true nature, beyond any mental form. What more is there to say? The whole world and all individuals are really *Brahman*, and abidance as that indivisible *Brahman* is itself deliverance. This is the essence and conclusion of all the Vedas. The scriptures are the authority for this."

The disciple realized the truth of the Self through these words of the Guru, through the authority of the scriptures and by his own understanding. He controlled his sense organs and, becoming one-pointed, remained for a short time absorbed in unswerving *samadhi* in that supreme Self. Then he rose up and spoke thus to his Guru:

"Oh Master of the supreme experience, incarnation of the supreme peace, of *Brahman*, of the eternal essence of non-duality, endless ocean of grace, I bow down to you."

Then, prostrating, he begins to tell of his own experience: "Through the grace of the blessed sight of you the affliction due to the evil of birth is over and in an instant I have attained the blissful state of identity. By realization of the identity of *Brahman* and Self my feeling of duality has been destroyed and I am free from outer activity. I cannot discriminate between what is and what is not.[5] Like the iceberg in the ocean, I have become absorbed bit by bit into the ocean of the Bliss of *Brahman* until I have become that ocean itself, whose nature and extent my intellect fails to plumb. How can one conceive of the vastness of this ocean of *Brahmic* Bliss full of the divine essence, how to describe it in words? The world

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[5] This does not imply that the disciple is in a state of ignorance, unable to differentiate between reality and illusion, but, on the contrary, that he is now established in the non-duality beyond all opposites, even the opposite of being and non-being.

that was perceived a moment ago has entirely vanished. Where has it gone? By whom has it been removed? Into what has it been dissolved? What a wonder is this! In this vast ocean of *Brahmic* Bliss full of divine experience, what is there to reject or accept, to see, hear or know, apart from its own Self? I alone am the Self of Bliss. I am unattached; I have neither a gross nor a subtle body. I am indestructible; I am perfect stillness; I am neither the doer nor the enjoyer; I undergo no change. Action is not mine. I am not the seer or the hearer, the speaker, the doer, or the enjoyer. I am neither things experienced nor things not experienced but he who illumines both. I am the void, within and without. I am beyond compare. I am the spirit of old. I am without beginning. There is no creation in me of 'I' or 'you', or 'this' or 'that'. I am both within and without all the elements as the conscious ether in them and also as the substratum on which they are. I am Brahma, I am Vishnu, I am Rudra, I am Isa, I am Sadasiva. I am beyond *Ishvara.*[6] I am the all-comprehensive witness, the indivisible, homogeneous *Brahman,* infinite, eternal, being itself, unbroken whole perfection, existence, eternal, pure, enlightened, liberated, and of supreme Bliss. What were formerly experienced as separate things and as experiencer-experience-experienced I now find to be all in myself. Even though the waves of the world arise owing to *maya*, as a wind rises and subsides, they arise and subside in me who is the unbounded ocean of Bliss.

"Fools who are condemned for their errors wrongly ascribe body and other ideas to me who is formless and immutable. It is like dividing illimitable, formless time into parts such as

[6] Even *Ishvara*, the personal God, is a condensation or manifestation of absolute Being and therefore to some extent a limitation. Even this is transcended in the state without impurities, without any ego-sense.

year, half-year and season. Just as the earth is not made wet by the waves of mirage, so destruction cannot touch me in any way, for I am unattached like the ether, separate from all that I illumine, like the sun, motionless as a mountain, boundless as the ocean. Just as the ether is unaffected by the clouds, so am I by the body; how then can it be my nature to wake up, dream, and sleep, as the body does? It is only the bodily limitations (upon Being) that come and go, act and reap the fruits of action, that are born, exist and dissolve. How can I perform *karma*, choose activity or withdrawal, reap the fruits of merit or demerit, I who am like the fixed mountain mentioned in the *Puranas*, who is ever motionless, indivisible, complete and perfect, like the ether, who is one perfect whole without senses, consciousness, form, or change? If a man's shadow is cold or hot or has good or evil qualities, that does not affect the man at all; and in the same way I am beyond virtues and vices. The scriptures also declare this. Just as the nature of a house does not affect the light within it, so too, objective characteristics cannot affect me who is their witness, distinct from them, changeless, and untouched. Just as the sun witnesses all activity, so am I the witness of this whole objective world. Just as fire pervades iron, so do I permeate and enlighten the world; and at the same time I am the substratum on which the world exists like the imaginary serpent in a piece of rope. Being the self-effulgent 'I', I am not the doer of anything nor he who causes it to be done. I am not the eater nor he who causes anything to be eaten; I am not the seer nor he who causes anything to be seen.

"It is the superimposed adjunct that moves. This movement of the reflected consciousness is ascribed by the ignorant to the consciousness itself. So too, they say that I am the doer, the enjoyer, that I, alas, am them. Being inactive like the sun (in causing growth upon the earth), being the Self of the forms

and elements, I remain untouched by the reflected light of consciousness. It makes no difference to me if this body drops down on earth or in water. The qualities of the reflected light of consciousness no more affect me than the shape of a pot affects the ether inside it. States and functions of the intellect such as doing, enjoying, understanding, being dull-witted or drunk, bound or liberated, do not affect me since I am the pure non-dual Self. The duties *(dharmas)* arising from *prakriti* in their thousands and hundreds of thousands no more affect me than the shadow cast by clouds affect the ether. I am that in which the whole universe from *prakriti* down to gross matter appears as a mere shadow, that which is the substratum, which illumines all, which is the Self of all, is of all forms, is all pervasive and yet distinct from all, that which is all void, which is distinct without any of the attributes of *maya*, that which is scarcely to be known by the gross intellect, which is ether itself, which has neither beginning nor end, which is subtle, motionless, formless, inactive, immutable, that pure *Brahman* in its natural state, unbroken, eternal, true, aware, endless, self-subsistent Bliss, non-dual *Brahman*.

"Master, I was perplexed in the nightmare forest of *samsara*, of birth, old age, and death, caused by *maya*, distressed by the tormenting episodes in it and terrified by the tiger of the ego. You awakened me from that nightmare by your grace and saved me, bringing me supreme Bliss. Great Master! By the glory of your grace even I have obtained the empire of real Being. I have become blessed and have accomplished the purpose of this life. Redeemed from the bondage of birth and death, I realize the reality of my being, which is the entire ocean of Bliss. Oh, it is all the glory of your grace, Oh supreme Master! Obeisance again and again to your blessed feet which, being in the form of the pure bliss of consciousness, are seen as the whole of creation. Obeisance for ever and ever!"

The supreme Master is thus addressed with a jubilant heart by the disciple who bows at his feet after realizing the truth of the one Being, the supreme Bliss. He replies: “Just as he who has eyes has nothing to do but delight in forms, so he who knows *Brahman* has no other satisfying use for his intellect than experience of the *Brahman* reality. Who would care to look at a painted moon when the full moon shines in all its splendour for our delight? No one who has true knowledge can give up the essence to find delight in what is unreal. There is neither satisfaction nor banishment of sorrow in the experience of unreality, therefore a man must make every effort to see with the eye of realization and with the mind in a state of perfect peace to see his own Self as *Brahman*, as the truth of non-duality shining as the Self of the whole universe. He must meditate on this and concentrate ceaselessly on the Self. Then he will enjoy unbroken experience of essential Bliss and this alone will satisfy him. It is the intellect which causes restlessness, appearing as a city in the clouds in the attributeless whole of the conscious Self, and so the intellect must achieve absolute stillness and this will give eternal bliss and serenity in *Brahman*. When stillness and silence have been attained there will be contentment and peace. Perfect silence free from latent tendencies is the only means of experiencing eternal bliss for the *mahatma*, for he who knows *Brahman*, who has realized the Self and experiences unbroken bliss.

“The sage who has thus realized the supreme *Brahman* will ever delight in the Self with unobstructed thought-current. He comes and goes, stands, sits, and lies down, performs whatever actions he will, with no need to observe place, time, posture, direction, rules of *yama* or other stages of yoga or positions for concentration. What need is there for rules such as *yama* for

realizing one's Self? No external discipline is needed to know one's Self as 'I am *Brahman*', just as 'Devadatta'[7] needs no outer technique to know himself as such. This ever existent Self shines of its own accord when the mind is pure, just as a pot is naturally seen when the eyesight is not defective. There is no need to consider the purity of place or time for abiding in the Self. Just as the world is illumined by the sun, so all the universes and the Vedas, Sastras, Puranas and various elements are illumined by *Brahman*, who is also consciously self-effulgent. How can this *Brahman* be illumined by any low nonexistent non-self? This supreme Self is self-effulgent with manifold powers *(shakti)*, incapable of being known by anyone, and yet is experienced by everyone as the 'I-I' in the Heart. It is in realizing this *Atman* that the knower of *Brahman* is released from bondage, and when released he knows the contentment of experiencing the essence of eternal Bliss. This perfection of his beauty is beyond imagining. He feels no happiness or sorrow on account of outer conditions, whether agreeable or disagreeable, and has no likes or dislikes. He accepts like a child all conditions that surround him owing to the desires of others. Just as an innocent boy is absorbed in his game without worrying about hunger, thirst, or physical distress, so is the sage absorbed in the play of his own Self without ego-consciousness and delights permanently in the Self. Ascending in the chariot of his body, he who enjoys the wide expanse of pure consciousness begs his food without any thought or feeling of humiliation, drinks the water from rivers, wraps himself in clothes that have not been washed or dried, or in the bark of trees, or goes naked. No code or rule of conduct binds him, for he is permanently free. Although sleeping on the ground like a child or madman, he remains

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[7] Taken here simply as a specimen name.

ever fixed in *Vedanta*. Mother Earth is the flowery couch on which he lies. He sleeps without fear in the forest or cemetery, for his sport and pleasure are in *Brahman*. He who is the universal Self assumes at will countless forms and has countless experiences. In one place he behaves like an idiot, in another like a learned man, and in third like one deluded. Again, in one place he moves about as a man of peace, in another as a king, in another as a beggar eating out of his hand for want of a bowl. At one place he is seen to be adored, at another decried. Thus he lives everywhere and the Truth behind him cannot be perceived by others. Although he has no riches he is eternally in bliss. Although others may not help him he is mighty in strength. Although he may not eat, he is eternally satisfied. He looks on all things with an equal eye. Though acting, it is not he who acts; though eating, it is not he who eats; though he has a body, he is bodiless. Though individualized, he is the One Indivisible whole. Knowing *Brahman* and liberated while yet in the body, he is not affected by likes and dislikes, joys and sorrows, auspicious and inauspicious things, natural to the common man who is attached to the body. Although the sun is never really caught by the dragon's head (in an eclipse), it seems to be, and fools who do not know the truth say: 'Look! The sun is caught!' Similarly they say that he who knows *Brahman*, has a body, but that is their delusion, because although he seems to have a body he is in no way affected by it. The body of the liberated man, although free from bondage, exists in one place or another, like the sloughed skin of a snake. The body of a liberated man, like a log of wood tossed up and down by the current of a river, may sometimes be immersed in pleasure owing to his *prarabdha* but even though this is so, due to the effects of latent tendencies in *prarabdha*, as with the body of a worldly person, he still remains the witness in his state of

inner silence, the hub of the wheel, free from desire and aversion and utterly indifferent. He neither attaches the senses to the objects that give pleasure nor detaches them. The fruits of his actions do not affect him in the slightest, since he is completely drunk with the unbroken experience of the nectar of bliss. He who knows *Brahman* is the absolute Self, the supreme Lord, with no need for special forms of meditation. Of this there is no doubt.

"He who knows *Brahman* has achieved the purpose of life and is eternally liberated as *Brahman*, even though living in the body and using its faculties. Indeed, he realizes the state of *Brahman* even with the destruction of the body and its adjuncts. It is like an actor on the stage who is the same individual whether he wears a mask or not. It makes no difference to a tree whether the place where its dead leaf falls is auspicious or not, whether it is a river, a canal, a street, or a temple of Siva. Similarly, it does not affect the sage where his body, already burnt in the fire of knowledge, is cast away. The Being-Consciousness-Bliss of the Self does not perish with the body, breath, intellect, and sense organs any more than a tree does with its leaves, flowers, and fruit. The scriptures also declare: 'Only that which is finite and mutable can perish,' and also: 'The Self, which is established consciousness, is Truth and is imperishable.' The sage is *Brahman* in the perfect Bliss of non-duality; he is established in Truth, which is *Brahman*. How then can it matter where and when he sheds his body, which is a vehicle of skin, flesh and impurities? Getting rid of the body, the staff and the water-pot (of the mendicant) is not really liberation; liberation as understood by the sages really means loosing the knot of ignorance in the Heart.

"Just as a stone, a tree, a straw, grain, a mat, pictures, a pot and so on, when burned, are reduced to earth (from which

they came), so the body and its sense organs, on being burnt in the fire of knowledge, become knowledge and are absorbed in *Brahman*, like darkness in the light of sun. When a pot is broken the space that was in it becomes one with space; so too when the limitation caused by the body and its adjuncts is removed, the sage realized during life, shines as *Brahman*, becoming absorbed in the *Brahman* he already was, like milk in milk, water in water, or oil in oil, and is radiant as the one supreme Self. Thus, when the sage who abides as *Brahman*, which is pure Being, obtains his disembodied absolute state he is never again reborn. How can there be rebirth for a sage who abides as *Brahman*, his body and its limitations burnt by the fire of knowledge, the identity of individual and Supreme? The existence of all that is either affirmed or denied in the one substratum of the indestructible, unattached, non-dual, absolute Self depends only on the mind, just as the appearance or disappearance of the imaginary snake in a piece of rope has no basis in reality. Bondage and liberation are creations of *maya*, superimpositions upon the *Brahman* imagined by the mind without any existence in reality. It is a fool who blames the sun for his own blindness. It is impossible to argue that bondage *(samsara)* is caused by the veiling power *(tamas)* of *maya* and liberation by its destruction, since there is no differentiation in the Self. Such an argument would lead to a denial of the truth of non-duality and an affirmation of duality. This would be contrary to the authority of the scriptures. How can there be any display of *maya* in non-dual *Brahman*, which is perfect stillness, one whole like the ether, spotless, actionless, unstained, and formless? The scriptures even proclaim aloud: 'There is in truth no creation and no destruction; no one is bound, no one is seeking liberation, no one is on the way to deliverance. There are none liberated. This is the absolute truth.' My dear disciple, this, the sum and

substance of all the *Upanishads*, the secret of secrets, is my instruction to you. You also may impart it to one who aspires after liberation, only be careful to examine him several times to make sure that he has real detachment and is free from all the sins and impurities of this dark age."

On hearing these words from the Guru, the disciple bows down to him several times and then takes leave and goes home in a state of Bliss. The Master also, immersed in the ocean of Bliss, wanders about the land in order to purify it.

Thus has been revealed the true nature of the Self in the form of a dialogue between the Guru and his disciple, as any who seek liberation can easily understand. May these useful instructions be followed by those who have faith in the authority of the scriptures and who aspire after liberation, by those advanced seekers who perform their prescribed duties without caring for the fruits of their actions and have thus cleansed themselves of mental impurities, who are not attached to the comforts of *samsara* and who have attained a state of equanimity. Souls wandering about in the wild and terrible forest of *samsara* are oppressed by the torment of thirst caused by the terrific heat of the threefold evil,[8] and are then deluded by the mirage of water. The great Master Shankara Bhagavatpadacharya wishes to inform them of the existence close at hand of an ocean of sweet water, the bliss of non-duality, so that they may obtain relief, and has blessed them with his *Vivekachudamani*, 'The Crown Gem of Discrimination,' which will confer on them the eternal bliss of liberation. This is beyond doubt.

Om

Peace, Peace, Peace.

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[8] (1) *adhyatmika* (2) *adhibhoutika* (3) *adhidaivika*

Drik Drisya Viveka

This composition of Shankaracharya was translated into Tamil by Sri Bhagavan. Bhagavan also composed the following introductory verse and introduction.

Oh thou divine Shankara,
Thou art the Subject
That has knowledge
Of subject and object.
Let the subject in me be destroyed
As subject and object.
For thus in my mind arises
The light as the single Siva.

Introduction

'*Brahman* is only one and non-dual' declare the *Srutis*. Since *Brahman* is the sole reality, according to *advaita*, how is it that *Brahman* is not apparent to us, whereas the *prapancha* (world, i.e., non-*Brahman*) is so vivid? Thus questions the advanced *sadhaka*.

In one's own Self, which is no other than *Brahman*, there is a mysterious power known as *avidya* (ignorance) which is beginningless and not separate from the Self. Its characteristics are veiling and presentation of diversity. Just as the pictures in a cinema, though not visible either in sunlight or in darkness, become visible in a spot of light in the midst of darkness, so in the darkness of ignorance there appears the reflected light of the Self, illusory and scattered, taking the form of thought.

This is the primal thought known as the ego, *jiva* or *karta* (doer), having the mind as the medium of its perceptions. The mind has a store of latent tendencies which it projects as the object of a shadow-show in the waking and dream states. This show, however, is mistaken for real by the *jiva*. The veiling aspect of the mind first hides the real nature of the Self and then presents the objective world to view. Just as the waters of the ocean do not seem different from the waves, so also for the duration of objective phenomena, the Self, though itself the sole being, is made to appear not different from them. Turn away from the delusion caused by latent tendencies and false notions of interior and exterior. By such constant practice of *sahaja samadhi*, the veiling power vanishes and the non-dual Self is left over to shine forth as *Brahman* itself. This is the whole secret of the *advaita* doctrine as taught by the master to the advanced *sadhaka*. Here the same teaching is contained, which Sri Shankaracharya has expounded concisely without any elaboration, in the following text.

The Text

All our perception pertains to the non-Self. The immutable Seer is indeed the Self. All the countless scriptures proclaim only discrimination between Self and non-Self.

The world we see, being seen by the eye, is *drisya* (object); the eye which sees it is *drik* (subject). But the eye, being perceived by the mind is *drisya* (object) and the mind which sees it is *drik* (subject). The mind, with its thoughts perceived by the Self, is *drisya* (object) and the Self is *drik* (subject). The Self cannot be *drisya* (object), not being perceived by anything else. The forms perceived are various, blue and yellow, gross and subtle, tall and short, and so on; but the eye that sees them remains one and the same. Similarly, the varying

qualities of the eye, such as blindness, dullness and keenness and of the ears and other organs, are perceived by the mind singly. So, too, the various characteristics of the mind, such as desire, determination, doubt, faith, want of faith, courage, want of courage, fear, shyness, discrimination, good and bad, are all perceived by the Self singly. This Self neither rises nor sets, neither increases nor decays. It shines of its own luminosity. It illumines everything else without the need for aid from other sources.

Buddhi, as the sum total of the inner organs, in contact with the reflected consciousness has two aspects. One is called egoity and the other mind. This contact of the *buddhi* with the reflected consciousness is like the identity of a red-hot iron ball with fire. Hence the gross body passes for a conscious entity. The contact establishing identity between the ego and the reflected Consciousness, is of three kinds.

1. The identification of the ego with the reflected Consciousness is natural or innate.

2. The identification of the ego with the body is due to past *karma.*

3. The identification of the ego with the witness is due to ignorance.

The natural or innate contact continues as long as the *buddhi,* but on realization of the Self it proves to be false. The third mentioned contact is broken when it is discovered by experience that there is no sort of contact of anything at all with the Self, which is Being. The second mentioned contact, that born of past *karma,* ceases to exist on the destruction of innate tendencies (*vasanas*). In the deep sleep state, when the body is inert, the ego is fully merged (in the causal ignorance). The ego is half manifest in the dream state, and its being fully

manifest is the waking state. It is the mode or modification of thought (with its latent tendencies) that creates the inner world of dreams in the dream state and the outer world in the waking state. The subtle body, which is the material cause of mind and ego, experiences the three states and also birth and death.

Maya of the causal body has its powers of projecting *(rajas)* and veiling *(tamas).* It is the projecting power that creates everything from the subtle body to the gross universe of names and forms. These are produced in the *Sat-Chit-Ananda* (Being-Consciousness-Bliss) like foam in the ocean. The veiling power operates in such a way that internally the distinction between subject and object cannot be perceived, and externally that between *Brahman* and the phenomenal world. This indeed is the cause of *samsara.* The individual with his reflected light of Consciousness is the subtle body existing in close proximity with the Self that is the *vyavaharika* (the empirical Self). This individual character of the empirical Self appears in the witness or *sakshi* also through false superimposition. But on the extinction of the veiling power (*tamas*), the distinction between witness and the empirical Self becomes clear; and the superimposition also drops away. Similarly, *Brahman* shines as the phenomenal world of names and forms only through the effect of the veiling power which conceals the distinction between them. When the veiling ends, the distinction between the two is perceived, for none of the activities of the phenomenal world exist in *Brahman.*

Of the five characteristics, Being, Consciousness, Bliss, name and form, the first three pertain to *Brahman* and name and form to the world. The three aspects of Being, Consciousness and Bliss exist equally in the five elements of ether, air, fire, water and earth and in *devas* (gods), animals, men, etc., whereas the names and forms are different.

Therefore, be indifferent to names and forms, concentrate on Being-Consciousness-Bliss and constantly practise *samadhi* (identity with *Brahman)* within the Heart or outside.

This practice of *samadhi* (identity with *Brahman*) is of two kinds: *savikalpa* (in which the distinction between knower, knowledge and known is not lost) and *nirvikalpa* (in which the above distinction is lost). *Savikalpa samadhi* again is of two kinds: that which is associated with words (sound), and meditation on one's own consciousness as the witness of thought forms such as desire, which is *savikalpa samadhi* (internal), associated with (cognizable) objects. Realizing one's Self as 'I am Being-Consciousness-Bliss without duality, unattached, self-effulgent', is *savikalpa samadhi* (internal) associated with words (sound). Giving up both objects and sound forms of the aforesaid two modes of *samadhi* and being completely absorbed in the Bliss experienced by the realization of the Self is *nirvikalpa samadhi* (internal). In this state steady abidance is obtained, like the unflickering flame of a light kept in a place free from wind. So also, in the Heart, becoming indifferent to external objects of name and form and perceiving only Being of (or as) *Sat*, is *savikalpa samadhi* (external) associated with objects; and being aware continually of that *Sat* (true existence) as the unbroken single essence of *Brahman* is *savikalpa samadhi* (external) associated with words (sound). After these two experiences, Being, which is uninterrupted like the waveless ocean, is *nirvikalpa samadhi* (external). One who meditates should spend his time perpetually in these six kinds of *samadhi*. By these, the attachment to the body is destroyed and the mind that perpetually abides in the Supreme Self (*paramatman*) wherever it may wander, is everywhere spontaneously in *samadhi*. By this constant practice of *samadhi*, the supreme Self, who is both highest and lowliest, who encompasses *Paramatman* as well as *jivatman* is directly

experienced, and then the knot of the Heart is loosened; all doubts are destroyed and all *karmas* (activities) cease too.

Of the three modes of individual being, the limited self (as in deep sleep), the empirical self (as in the waking state) and the dreaming self, only the individual limited by the deep sleep state is the true Self *(paramarthika).* Even he is but an idea. The Absolute alone is the true Self. In reality and by nature he is *Brahman* itself, only superimposition creates the limitations of individuality in the Absolute. It is to the *paramarthika jiva* that the identity of *Tat-tvam-asi* (That thou art) and other great texts of the *Upanishads* applies, and not to any other. The great *maya* (the superimposition without beginning) with her veiling and projecting power *(tamas* and *rajas)* veils the single indivisible *Brahman* and, in that *Brahman,* creates the world and individuals. The individual *(jiva),* a concept of the empirical self in the *buddhi,* is indeed the actor and enjoyer and the entire phenomenal world is its object of enjoyment. From time without beginning, till the attainment of liberation, individual and world have an empirical existence. They are both empirical. The empirical individual appears to have the power of sleep in the shape of the veiling and projecting powers. It is associated with Consciousness. The power covers first the individual empirical self and the cognized universe, and then these are imagined in dream. These dream perceptions and the individual who perceives them are illusory, because they exist only during the period of dream experience. We affirm their illusory nature, because on waking up from dream no one sees the dream, no one sees the dream objects. The dreaming self experiences the dream world as real, while the empirical self experiences the empirical world as real but, when the *paramarthika jiva* is realized, knows it to be unreal. The *paramarthika jiva,* as distinguished from those of the waking and dream experiences,

is identical with *Brahman*. He has no ‘other’. If he does see any ‘other’, he knows it to be illusory.

The sweetness, liquidity, and coldness of water are characteristics present equally in waves and foam. So, too, the Being-Consciousness-Bliss character of the Self (the *paramarthika)* is present in the empirical self and through him in the dream self also, because of their being only illusory creations in the Self. The foam with its qualities, such as coldness, subsides in the waves, the waves with their characteristics, such as liquidity, subside in the water, and the ocean alone exists as at first. Similarly, the dream self and its objects are absorbed in the empirical self; then the empirical world with its characteristics is absorbed in the *paramarthika* and, as at first, Being-Consciousness-Bliss which is *Brahman* shines alone.

13

Other Translations

Vichara Mani Mala

(Jewel Garland of Enquiry)

This is a compilation of *the salient points extracted by Bhagavan Sri Ramana Maharshi from a large volume in Tamil known as* Vichara Sagara (*Ocean of Enquiry*), *which itself was a translation from the original in Hindi by Mahatma Nischaldas. On being requested by a devotee, Arunachala Mudaliar, who complained that the volume in Tamil was too difficult to read and understand, Sri Bhagavan graciously made the following extracts.*

Invocation

I am that *Brahman* which is bliss, which is eternal, effulgent, all-pervasive, the substratum of names and forms, which is not cognized by the impure intellect, but is cognized by the pure intellect, stainless and boundless. That is to say, when one discards the *jiva* (individual being) of the form of *ahamkara* (ego-sense), which is the apparent meaning of the word ‘I’, what remains merely as the effulgent and conscious *Atman* (Self), which is the implied meaning of the word ‘I’,

is *Brahman*. This can also be understood from the following words of Arunagiriar's experience: "After swallowing me who had the form of 'I' (ego), that supreme Being remained as mere Self."

The Text

The noble aspirant for liberation whose mind has become pure and one-pointed by the cessation of evil thoughts, as a result of the motiveless acts and meditations performed by him in his former lives, and who is subject only to the defect of the concealing power (*avarana shakti*) in the form of ignorance of the Self, and who possesses the four qualifications of discrimination, dispassion, the six virtues like self-control and yearning for liberation, being unable to endure the miseries of *samsara*, approaches the Sadguru who is compassionate, who has realized the meaning of *Vedanta* and who is established in *Brahman*, and, after prostrating before him with fear and reverence, questions him thus:

Disciple: Swami, what are the means of putting an end to the miseries of samsara *like birth and death and of attaining supreme bliss?*

Guru: Oh Disciple! What a delusion! You are always of the nature of bliss. There is not the least trace of the miseries of *samsara* in you. Therefore do not take upon yourself the miseries of birth, etc. You are the conscious *Brahman* which is free from birth and death.

Disciple: Is not liberation the cessation of misery and the attainment of supreme bliss? If I am (already) of the nature of bliss how is it possible for me to attain the bliss which is always attained and similarly to get rid of the misery which never existed?

Guru: This is possible just as one can seek and find a bracelet which was on one's arm all the time but which one had forgotten about, and on finding it look upon it as a new acquisition. It is possible as in the case of the serpent which, at no time present in the rope, was mistaken for one, but which seemed to be there and seems to disappear when one discovers that it is only a piece of rope.

Disciple: Will the nonexistence of misery and the existence of bliss coexist in one and the same state (lit. substance) of liberation?

Guru: They will. Just as the nonexistence of the imagined serpent is the existence of the rope, the nonexistence of the imagined misery is the existence of bliss.

Disciple: As bliss arises only from contact with objects, how can I be said to be (of the nature of) bliss?

Guru: The bliss of the Self will not be felt in the intellect which is distracted by desires for objects by one who does not know the Self. When the object of desire is obtained the intellect becomes steady for a moment and turns inward. Then the bliss of the Self is reflected in it and this gives rise to a delusion that there was bliss in the object. But when other objects are desired this bliss vanishes. It is similar to the bliss which one experiences on the arrival of one's son from a foreign country. It does not last as long as the object which seemed to be the cause of it. Further, bliss is experienced in the state of *samadhi* and deep sleep, even without objects. Therefore there is no bliss in objects. The Self alone is bliss. It is because the bliss of the Self alone is experienced by all, that all are proclaimed by the Vedas to be of the form of bliss.

*Disciple: But does the sage (*jnani*) who knows the Self desire objects and experience bliss, or does he not?*

Guru: Although he may desire objects and experience bliss like the ignorant person, he does not imagine that bliss to be any different from the bliss of the Self.

Disciple: When the misery of birth, death, etc. is actually experienced how can it be said that it never exists in me?

Guru: Know that the world of birth, death, etc. is an illusory appearance like the serpent in the rope and blueness in the sky, or like dreams, due to your ignorance of your Self which is *Brahman.*

*Disciple: What is the support (*adhara*) for this extensive world?*

Guru: Just as the rope is the support and basis for the delusive serpent which appears when the rope is not recognized as such, so you are the support and basis for the world which appears when you do not know your Self.

*Disciple: Kindly explain distinctly the ideas of support (*adhara*) and basis (*adhishtana*).*

Guru: Even in the unreal serpent there is a concept 'this' which is mixed up with the general concept 'this' underlying the rope. Similarly in the unreal world there is a concept 'It exists' which is mixed up with the general concept of existence underlying the Self. This existence is the support of the world. Again, just as there is the particular concept 'rope' (besides the general concept of 'this') there is also the particular concept of the Self, namely that it is unattached, immutable, ever-liberated, all-pervasive, etc. This is not cognized at the time of the delusion, but, when cognized, removes the delusion. This particular concept of Self is the basis of the world.

Disciple: Corresponding to the seer who is separate from the rope which is the support and basis of the serpent, who is the seer apart from me who is the support and basis of the world?

Guru: If the basis is insentient a separate seer is necessary. If the basis is sentient it will itself be the seer. Just as the witnessing consciousness which is the basis of the dream is itself the seer of the dream, you are yourself the seer of the world.

Disciple: If the world of the waking state comes into existence and falsely appears like dreams through nescience, why should we speak of any distinction between the waking state and the dream state and say that the waking state has relative (empirical: vyavaharika*) reality while the dream state has only personal (*pratibhasika*) reality?*

Guru: Since a dream appears without the help of the appropriate time, space and materials on account of nescience accompanied by the defect (*dosham*) of sleep, it is spoken of as a personal state. Since the waking state appears in the supreme Self which is free from time, space and materials, owing to nescience alone, it is spoken of as the relative state. They are thus described with reference to the three states of reality (personal, relative and absolute). When we think clearly there is no difference between them. Nor is there any difference between the waking and the dream state. Undifferentiated consciousness is the only true reality. Whatever is different from it is personal and has nescience as its material cause and consciousness as its basis.

Disciple: If that is so why is there a cessation of the dream state even in the absence of knowledge of Brahman *while the state of waking does not cease without knowledge of* Brahman*?*

Guru: Although there cannot be complete cessation of the dream state until there is knowledge of *Brahman* in the waking state, the defect of sleep, which is the immediate cause of the dream, may disappear by the emergence of the waking state which is inimical to it.

Disciple: The objects of the waking state prior to the dream exist in the waking state succeeding the dream also. But the objects of one dream are not seen in the next dream. How then can the two states be regarded as similar?

Guru: All objects are the transformation by nescience of the underlying consciousness. When a concept arises they also arise and when a concept ceases they also cease. Therefore it cannot be said that the objects of the previous waking state exist in the subsequent waking state also. As in a dream they (the objects of the subsequent waking state) come into existence for the time being. Therefore both are similar.

Disciple: Since a man who wakes up from a dream believes the objects he sees to be the same as before his dream, it cannot be said that they come into existence only when there is knowledge of them. Objects exist permanently prior to and after the knowledge of them.

Guru: Just as the things which come into existence for the time being in a dream seem to have existed unchanged for a long time, so also do the objects which come into existence in the waking state on account of strong nescience. The ideas of cause and effect in respect of these objects are also similar.

Disciple: If the bondage of samsara *came into existence on account of ignorance of the Self, when did that ignorance arise?*

Guru: The ignorance, arising from the Self, which is *Brahman*, is mere imagination (*kalpita*) and has no beginning.

Disciple: Since darkness cannot exist in the sun, how can nescience exist in Brahman *which is pure consciousness? Even if it exists, it cannot exist in what is clearly known or in what is not at all known. Superimposition of a false reality upon a true, is possible only when the general aspect of something is known and not its particular aspect.* Brahman *has no parts like general and particular; it is attributeless; so how can there be the superimposition of bondage?*

Guru: Although *Brahman* is consciousness, the general (indistinct) aspect of that all-pervasive consciousness which is of the nature of effulgence is not inimical to nescience, but helpful to it. In deep sleep nescience coexists with the consciousness of the Self. The general (possibility of) fire within the wood is not inimical to darkness, but helpful to it. But as the actualized (manifest) fire produced by rubbing the wood is inimical to darkness, so also the distinct consciousness produced in the mind as *Brahman* is inimical to nescience. Although *Brahman* is without attributes (and cannot therefore be cognized) its general existence is known even in the state of nescience in the form of 'I am', while its particular aspects like consciousness, bliss, etc. are not then known, but are known only in the state of knowledge. As appearances are the result of nescience, there can be the bondage of superimposition in the attributeless *Brahman*, which is known as existence and unknown as consciousness and bliss.

Disciple: Although the world is unreal it is the cause of miseries like birth and death. An unreal nightmare will not occur if japa *is done (before going to sleep). Analogous to this, what can be done to prevent the appearance of the world?*

Guru: That which appears owing to ignorance of something will cease to appear only through knowledge of that something. The serpent and the silver which appear on account of the

ignorance of the rope and the nacre will disappear only through knowledge of them. Similarly the world which appears on account of ignorance of the Self will disappear only through knowledge of the Self. *Brahman* is infinite, homogeneous, unattached to anything, without birth, etc., invisible and without name and form. The nescience imagined in it and its effects, namely the individual, the Lord and the world, are unreal in all the three periods of time. Whatever is seen is the play of the intellect which is the effect of that nescience. *Brahman,* while remaining unmoved, illumines the intellect. This intellect projects its false imagination in the states of waking and dreaming and merges in the nescience in the state of deep sleep. 'Just as the water of the mirage does not make the desert wet this unreal thing (world) will not do any harm to me who is its basis.' Such a conviction is real knowledge. This is the means of liberation. I have already said this. Darkness will not disappear through anything except light; it will not disappear through ritualistic acts, meditation (*upasana*)[1] etc. The darkness of nescience departs along with its effects, from him in whose Heart the light of knowledge arises. He remains always as the unattached and homogeneous Self of the form of *Brahman.* Nothing came into existence in the past. Nor is there anything existing now. Nor will there be anything in the future. Since the objects that are known do not (really) exist, the terms 'witness' and 'seer' are not applicable. Since there is no bondage there is no liberation. Since there is no nescience there is no knowledge. He who has known this and cast away the sense of duty is a sage (*jnani*). Whether his senses come into contact with their objects or not he is unattached and free from desires. Therefore, even though he may appear to act, he does nothing.

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[1] *Upasana* is the uninterrupted meditation upon a deity or a form or a word like Om until one becomes that deity or form or word. It is a technique which is not generally followed nowadays. Its modern equivalent is *bhakti* (devotion).

Disciple: How can the individual who is of the form of 'I' 'I' and is numerous and finite and subject to attachment and other forms of misery, be identical with Brahman *which is one and all-pervasive and free from attachment and other forms of misery? If individual and* Brahman *are the same, who is it that acts? And who bestows the fruits of action?*

Guru: Although *Brahman* cannot be identical with the individuality (*jiva*) which is limited to the inner organ (*antahkarana*) and which is the apparent meaning of 'I', it can be with the witness (*sakshi*), which is the implied meaning of the word 'I'. It is the reflected part (*abhasa bhaga*) of the *jiva* which performs action. The reflected part in *Ishvara* (God), which is the apparent meaning of the word *Tat* (*Brahman*), bestows the fruits of action. There is no difference in the consciousness which is the implied meaning of these words (I and *Tat*). Nor do these two aspects (*jiva* and *Ishvara*) really exist.

Disciple: Who is the jiva*? Who is the* sakshi *(witness)? Is not a witness other than the* jiva *a sheer impossibility like the son of a barren woman?*

Guru: Just as the reflection of the sky in a pot becomes the sky in the water, consciousness established in the intellect (*buddhi*) along with the reflected consciousness (*abhasa*) in the intellect, accompanied by desires and action, becomes the *jiva* who is the doer, enjoyer and *samsari*. The consciousness which is the basis of the intellect and which is the attribute of the *jiva* or the finite (*vyasti*) nescience, is the immutable witness (*kutastha*). He has no beginning and is unchanging. Features (*dharmas*) like good and evil, joy and sorrow, going to another world and coming back to this, belong to the reflected consciousness alone. Even in the reflected consciousness they exist only in the inner organ which is its

attribute. They do not exist in the consciousness which is the substance part (of the *jiva*). The substance part of the *jiva is* the witness. In one and the same consciousness the inner organ is the adjunct (*upadhi*) for the ideas of witness and attribute for the idea of *jiva*. That is to say, the single consciousness becomes the *jiva* along with the inner organ and the witness when bereft of it. That is, one and the same inner organ is the adjunct of consciousness in the eyes of one who lacks discrimination. Therefore the single consciousness is the witness for a man of discrimination and *jiva* for one who lacks discrimination.

Disciple: How is it possible for even the witness, who is manifold and limited on account of the multiplicity of jivas, *to be identical with* Brahman *who is one?*

Guru: Just as the space in a pot which is manifold and limited is not different from, and in fact is, the same as total space (*mahakasa*), the witness who is manifold and limited is not different from *Brahman* but is *Brahman*. It is therefore possible for it to be identical with *Brahman*. Therefore know 'I am *Brahman*'.

Disciple: For whom is this knowledge? For the jiva *or for the witness?*

Guru: Knowledge and ignorance are for the *jiva* alone and not for the witness.

Disciple: Will not the knowledge 'I am Brahman' *which arises in the jiva, which is different from* Brahman, *be false?*

Guru: As the immutable Self (*kutastha*) implied in the term 'I' is always one with *Brahman*, like the pot-space and infinite space, it is completely identical with it. As for the *jiva* implied in the term 'I', it can have identity with *Brahman* 'by removal of obstruction' (*badha samanadhikaranyam*) through negating

the idea of *jiva,* just as the man one imagines one sees in a post (in a dim light) becomes one with the post on the negation of the idea of its being a man.

*Disciple: Do the reflected consciousness (*abhasa*) and the immutable (*kutastha*) which are implied in the term 'I' exist at the same time? Or do they appear at different times?*

Guru: They appear at the same time. The reflected consciousness is the object of the witness, but the witness is self-cognized. When there is actual knowledge, of pots and other external objects what happens is this: The concept part in the concept of the inner organ accompanied by the reflected consciousness goes out as far as the pots and other objects and assumes their forms and removes the obstruction (*avaranam*) which naturally covers them, on account of ignorance. Just as a non-luminous object covered by a pot will not be seen (in the dark) even if the pot is broken by a stick, but can be seen with the help of a lamp, even so the reflected part illumines the objects.

When there is direct realization of *Brahman,* which is the Self, what happens is this: The inner organ, with the help of the sound produced by the important scriptural saying (*mahavakya*)[2] 'That thou art' (*Tat tvam asi*) when connected with the ear, takes the form of *Brahman* (*Brahmakara*) and loses contact with the senses. This is like the knowledge of the tenth man (*dasama*) which arises through the sound produced by the sentence 'you are the tenth man', or like the ideas of joy and sorrow which arise without any (corresponding) external objects. This concept of the form of

[2] *Vedantic* sayings are of two kinds, namely chief and secondary. The texts which propound the nature of the *jiva* and *Brahman* are secondary texts. They produce indirect (intellectual) knowledge. The chief texts propound the identity of the *jiva* and *Brahman*. They produce direct knowledge.

Brahman removes the obstruction hiding the Self and then the slight ignorance which still persists in the inner organ disappears like the dirt (in a cloth) which is removed by soap. Thereafter *Brahman* becomes manifest by its own effulgence, like the light of the glorious sun which shines when slight obstructions, like when fingers held over one's eyes are removed. Just as a lamp kept in a pot shines without the aid of another light when the pot is broken, *Brahman* too does not require the help of the reflected consciousness.

*Disciple: What are the chief (*antaranga*) and secondary (*bahiranga*) means of attaining this knowledge?*

Guru: Ritualistic sacrifices and similar acts and meditation (*upasana*) performed without motive are the secondary means. The four (qualifications)[3] like discrimination, the three (steps)[4] and (the one) enquiry into the meaning of 'That' and 'Thou' — these eight make up the chief means.

Disciple: If knowledge arises through the 'saying' alone, where is the need for 'hearing,' etc.?

Guru: Knowledge is of two kinds, namely steady (free from defects) and unsteady (defective). Although an inferior aspirant (*mandadhikari*) who has doubts and false notions may have direct knowledge through the teaching of the 'saying' it will not produce the proper effect; it is defective.

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[3] The four qualifications are (1) discrimination between what is eternal and what is fleeting (*nityanitya vastu viveka*) (2) absence of desire for the enjoyment of the fruits of one's actions in this world and the next (*ihamutrartha phala bhoga viraga*) (3) the possession of the six virtues which are control of the mind (*sama*), control of the sense organs (*dama*), cessation of activity (*uparati*), fortitude (*titiksha*), faith in the scriptures and the guru (*sraddha*) and concentration of mind (*samadhana*); and (4) yearning for liberation.

[4] The three steps are hearing (*sravana*), reflection (*manana*) and uninterrupted contemplation (*nididhyasana*).

By constant practice of 'hearing,' etc., the defect will be removed. This is the aim of 'hearing,' etc. In the case of a superior aspirant (*uttama adhikari*) whose inner organ is extremely pure and free from the doubts and false notions, so that steady direct knowledge will arise by merely hearing the saying, it is not necessary to have hearing, etc., (again) for removing the defects. He alone is 'liberated while alive' (*jivan mukta*), whose wisdom is firm (*sthita prajna*).

Disciple: What are the distinguishing marks of the sage and the ignorant person?

Guru: The ignorant person is distinguished by his attachment (*raga*), the sage by dispassion. Even if the ignorant person occasionally develops dispassion, it is likely to change since he has not got rid of the sense of reality in the objects of the senses. His dispassion is superficial. On the other hand, the dispassion of the sage, which has developed out of his sense of the unreality of objects of the senses, does not change at any time and is therefore intense.

*Disciple: Why do some persons say that ritualistic acts (karma) accompanied by meditation (*upasana*) and knowledge (*jnana*) are the cause of steadiness?*

Guru: The idea that the Self, which is separate from the body, is the doer and enjoyer and the idea that the doer, the act and its result are different from one another, are the cause of ritualistic acts; the result is impermanent *samsara*. The Self is of the nature of the unattached *Brahman;* the doer, the act and the result are not distinct from the Self; this is knowledge, and its fruit is eternal liberation. So how can these two coexist?

Disciple: So long as the inner organ exists its natural quality of unsteadiness will not leave even the sage. Therefore if it is

*not an obstacle to liberation after death (*videhamukti*) how can there be the experience of bliss of liberation while alive? Is it not necessary for even the sage to meditate (do* upasana*) in order to remove the unsteadiness of the mind?*

Guru: Since *samadhi* and distraction are the same to a sage of steadfast wisdom, he does not enter into any action for the sake of steadiness of mind. For him there is no nescience as a cause of his activity, nor any delusion of difference as a result of nescience, nor attachment and hatred resulting from the delusion of difference. Only *prarabdha* (that part of one's *karma* which has to be worked out in this life) remains; this is the cause of his activity. And that being different from person to person, there is no fixity (*lit.* order) in regard to the activity arising out of *prarabdha*. Hence the sage's activity and inactivity are governed by *prarabdha*. Therefore there can be desire for sense enjoyment and efforts to attain it, as in the case of Janaka and others, on account of the *prarabdha* responsible for enjoyment. Similarly, there can be the desire for liberation while alive, and disgust with sense-enjoyment as in the case of Suka, Vamadeva and others, on account of the *prarabdha* responsible for inactivity. The bliss of *Brahman* will not become manifest owing to the mere immobility of the inner organ. It will become manifest only through the concept of the form of *Brahman* (*Brahmakara vritti*). Since this will arise only through reflection (*chintana*) on the meaning of the *Vedanta* (texts), and since unsteadiness will disappear even through this, one who desires to have the bliss of liberation while alive has to reflect on the meaning of *Vedanta* texts only and need not meditate (do *upasana*).

Disciple: Can the sage have too much activity?

Guru: When activity is excessive, happiness will decrease; when activity is less, the happiness will be more. But

knowledge remains the same. Although activity is inimical to that (kind of) happiness which is distinct from liberation while alive, it is not inimical to liberation while alive, since there is not delusion of bondage by activity and inactivity so far as the Self is concerned.

Disciple: Since the sage cannot have attachment on account of his seeing all objects as non-Self, unreal and evil, what can motivate his activity?

Guru: Although he knows the body to be unreal, the sage may be active on account of his *prarabdha;* for instance, he may go begging, etc., to maintain the body on account of his *prarabdha*. It is like people watching a conjuring act even when they know how it is done, or like an invalid doing things that are bad for him even though he knows that they are.

Disciple: What is the meaning of saying that the sage has no desires?

Guru: It is not that his inner organ will not take the form of desires. As the inner organ is not the product of pure *sattva* alone, but of the less prominent *rajas* and *tamas*, in combination with the prominent *sattva*, all the qualities will more or less exist in it. Therefore, so long as the inner organ remains there will not be entire absence of desires which are modifications of *rajas*. But the sage does not mistake the desires for characteristics of the Self. That is the difference. He is unattached. Though he acts he is a non-doer. That is why the scripture (*sruti*) says that the good and bad acts done by the body and the merit and demerit (acquired thereby) after attaining knowledge do not affect him.

Disciple: Is it not necessary for the sage to enter into blissful and non-dual nirvikalpa samadhi *in which concepts are all absorbed in nescience, as in deep sleep, and there is no experience of nescience-covered bliss and the concept of the*

inner organs in the form of Brahman *(*Brahmakara vritti*) is absorbed in the effulgence of* Brahman*?*

On hearing this the Guru laughed thinking, 'Why does he talk like a fool?'

Disciple: Won't one who, while alive, gives up the bliss of liberation to enjoy sense pleasures, give up liberation after death for the desire to attain heavenly worlds?

Guru: The rejection of the bliss of liberation while alive and the desire for worldly enjoyments may happen in the case of a sage on account of his *prarabdha,* but they will not happen after his nescience is burnt up by his knowledge. Therefore his life force (*prana*) will not go out and he cannot become embodied again either in this world or any other on account of *prarabdha.* Hence the rejection of liberation after death and desire for, or attainment of, other worlds is not possible for the sage.

Disciple: What is liberation while alive? And what is liberation after death?

Guru: The absence of the delusion of bondage even while one is embodied, is liberation while alive. The absorption of the gross and subtle nescience in consciousness after the experience of *prarabdha* is liberation after death.

This is the gist of the important scriptural texts.

On hearing this the disciple experienced the direct knowledge of his Self and, after first experiencing liberation while alive, attained liberation after death.

From the Srimad Bhagavatam and Rama Gita

The following stanzas from the Srimad Bhagavatam *and* Rama Gita were *rendered into Tamil verses by Sri Bhagavan.*

Whether the impermanent body is at rest or moves about, or whether by reason of *prarabdha* it clings to him or falls away from him, the Self-realised *siddha* is not aware of it, even as the drunken man blinded by intoxication is unaware whether his clothes are on his body or not.

—*Srimad Bhagavatam*

The conjuror deludes the world, while remaining undeluded himself. But the *siddha* deludes himself first, and then deludes others. How wonderful this is!

— *Rama Gita*

Who is Hara

This verse is Bhagavan's Tamil translation of the first sutra, *a Sanskrit couplet, of the* Sivajnanabodham.

When the world that comprises men, women, things, and so on, is viewed as an effect, God, the creator, exists as its cause. Since he destroys and creates this world, regard that God to be Hara (Siva).

Ramana Ashtottara Satanamastotra

Invocation

Sri Bhagavan translated from Sanskrit into Tamil the following two stanzas. They are the invocatory verses written by Swami Viswanathan for his hymn of 108 Names in praise of Sri Bhagavan.

Let us meditate in the Heart on Ramana, the
boundless ocean of Being-Awareness-Bliss, of which
the universe is but a wave, the steadfast one
established firmly in the Heart-cave's depth,
free from distracting thought.

To you who gained new birth by remembering
the feet of Arunachala-Siva and, swept away
by the vast, swelling tide of His grace divine,
became Himself; to you who, dwelling in the Heart
as sole monarch, purify the world by constant *tapas;*
to you, Sri Ramana, the world-transcending light,
we offer adoration.

The Heart and the Brain

About these nine verses the Maharshi said, "When I was in Virupaksha Cave, Nayana came there once with a boy named Arunachala [N. S. Arunachalam Iyer]. He had studied up to the school's final class. While Nayana and I were talking, the boy sat in a bush nearby. He somehow listened to our conversation and composed nine verses in English, giving the gist of what we were talking about. The verses were good and so I translated them into Tamil verses in Ahaval *metre. They read like the Telugu* Dwipada *metre.*[1]"

The following is a prose rendering of Sri Bhagavan's Tamil translation of the nine verses.[2]

1. The heart of the world (Sri Bhagavan) and the brain of the world (Kavyakantha) began to converse between themselves in the beautiful sacred cave (Virupaksha). All who heard those words at that time remained speechless as pillars.

2. The light of the sun, which exists and shines as the heart of this earth, illumines the moon in the height, and the moon gives light to the earth;

3. Likewise, Upanishads came from the lips of the *Muni* (Sri Bhagavan), whose place (or abode) is the Heart, addressed to the Lord (Kavyakantha), whose place (or abode) is the brain, and were also heard by us as light is received by the earth.

---

[1] Letters from Sri Ramanasramam, 13th February 1947

[2] The boy's verses were published in the July, 1983 Mountain Path

4. I shall compose, though ungrammatically, the truth of every precious word of the pure sacred sayings I heard. If asked, ‘Why is it the Truth?’ it is merely because it is the Truth.

5. I, the ignorant one, shall prattle that which Sri Ramana, the *Maha-mauni*, lovingly told about the Heart and brain, which is more secret than the meaning of any scripture.

6. “Just as the pictures in the film, which is placed inside the machine (the cinema projector) are expanded through the magnifying lens and move as very big pictures on the wall,

7. So the atom-like *vasanas* in the Heart are made gross by the lens of the brain, go out through the eyes, mouth and nose and so on (that is, through the five senses) and appear in space as wonderful pictures of many kinds.

8. I spent all theses days in the Heart, and when I came from the Heart into the world I found my way to get back into the Heart through the brain, and thereby I also discovered my system (or method).”

9. Thus they finished speaking these pure words, which the Lord (Kavyakantha) then noted in his mind, which all of us understood well, and which I have now quoted.

Na Karmana

"Na Karmana" *is the last Vedic chant of both the morning and evening* Veda Parayanas *at Sri Ramanasramam. It is customary for devotees to stand as it is chanted and then prostrate to the Guru at its conclusion. This tradition continues in the Ashrama at the Master's* samadhi *shrine.*

In 1938, A. W. Chadwick (Sadhu Arunachala), with the help of some devotees, translated "Na Karmana" *into English. Sri Bhagavan corrected and approved his English versification. About the same time Sri Bhagavan translated* "Na Karmana" *into Tamil.*

'Tis not by means of action immortality is gained,
Nor even yet by offspring, nor possession of much gold,
But by renunciation by some it is attained.

The Sages who their senses have all thoroughly controlled
Attain that *Sat* than which high heaven's Supremacy is less,
Which ever doth within the Heart its radiance unfold.

The Adepts by renunciation and one-pointedness
Who have become both pure in heart and who have also known
The certainty of that one Truth Vedanta doth profess,
Attain Self-realization; when ignorance has flown
From body and its cause Maya they'll gain full liberty.

That only as minute *Akash* what has eternal shone,
That is within the Lotus-Heart, of every sorrow free,
of the Immaculate Supreme, the seat molecular,
Within the body's inner core, should meditated be.

He verily is Lord Supreme. He is exalted far
Above the Primal Word, which is of Veda first and last;
In which blends the Creative Cause, so merged in one they are.

Appendix

Sri Ramana Nool Thirattu

The Nool Thirattu *of Sri Bhagavan in Tamil carries a Preface (also in Tamil) written by T.K. Sundaresa Iyer, a well known, outstanding devotee. One special feature of this Preface is that there is a significant correction, an affirmation by Sri Bhagavan himself to the effect that aspirants who study the works are certain to attain the bliss of liberation.*

We present here an extract from T.K. Sundaresa Iyer's At the Feet of Bhagavan *explaining the circumstances in which he wrote the Preface. We also present its translation.*

Genesis of Introduction to the Collected Works

IT was about 1927 when Sri Bhagavan's *Nool Thirattu* in Tamil was under preparation to be published. There was talk among the Ashram pandits that the book must have a Preface, although the devotees of Maharshi considered that nobody was qualified to write a preface to his works. The pandits proposed the writing of a Preface, but none of them

came forward to write it, each excusing himself that he was not qualified for the task. It was a drama of several hours as one proposed another for the purpose, and each declined the honour. Bhagavan was watching all this quietly.

At about 10-30 in the night, as I was passing beside the Hall, Sri Bhagavan looked at me and said, "Why not you write the Preface yourself?"

I was taken aback at his proposal, but meekly said, "I would venture to write it only if I had Bhagavan's blessing in the task." Bhagavan said, "Do write it, and it will come all right."

So I began writing at the dead of night, and to my great surprise within three quarters of an hour I made a draft as if impelled, driven by some Supreme Force. I altered not even a comma of it, and at 2 o'clock in the early morning I placed it at the feet of Bhagavan. He was happy to see how the contents were arranged and to note the simplicity of the expressions used. He passed it as all right and asked me to take it away.

But as I had taken the written sheets of paper only a few steps away, Sri Maharshi beckoned me to show them to him once again. I had concluded the Preface in the following way: "It is hoped that this work, in the form of Bhagavan's Grace, will give to all who aspire to eternal Truth, Liberation in the form of gaining supreme Bliss, shaped as the taking away of all sorrow." Maharshi said, "Why have you said 'It is hoped'? Why not say 'It is certain'?" So saying, he corrected with his own hands my '*nambukiren*' into '*tinnam*'.

Thus Sri Maharshi set his seal of approval to the book, giving to his devotees that great charter of Liberation, in the form of his teaching (*Upadesa*) which leaves no trace of doubt about it in the mind.

The Collected Works of Ramana Maharshi

T. K. Sundaresa Iyer's Preface

(Translated from the Tamil Original)

This is Tiruvannamalai, the sacred place where Arunachala, the self-created Linga of Fire, shines. Arunachala, the centre of the earth, attracts seekers who are rich in *tapas* and confers liberation on those who simply think of it. Bhagavan Sri Ramana Maharshi who is of the form of Dakshinamurti and always abides in the Self, graces this place in order to enable countless souls to attain liberation from *samsara* and reach the bliss of final beatitude. He confers Grace from his state of supreme silence. His extraordinary compassion flows like a flood. This *Ramana Nool Thirattu* (The Collected Works of Ramana Maharshi) is a golden work, it is nectar, it is his *prasad* to us.

It is due to our good merit and luck that compositions of various types — prose, poetry, dialogue and song — are available in this work. The learned and not so learned alike, can, according to their levels of understanding, read it and be profited.

Sri Arunachala Stuti Panchakam (Five Hymns to Arunachala), the first part of this work, was composed in the early days when Sri Bhagavan had just begun to speak, breaking *mouna*. It is the flood of the Self itself. Devotees should be delighted to go through the explanations on *bhakti* and *jnana* provided by Ramana Murti himself. He is the Supreme Being,

and it comes from his Heart. This revelation by him confirms his own verse in *Akshara Mana Malai*, "That each one is Reality Itself, Thou wilt of Thy Nature show, O Arunachala!"

Regarding *Upadesa Noon Malai*, the second work of this compilation:

Upadesa Undiyar (The Essence of Instruction) was written in response to the request of a devotee, Sri Muruganar. He had started composing *Tiruvundiyar* but wanted Bhagavan to guide him. Sri Bhagavan wrote the rest of the verses himself and thus completed this great work.

Ulladu Narpadu (Forty Verses) and its supplement were written in response to the requests of the devotees from time to time. *Ekatma Panchakam* (Five Verses on the Self) was first composed in Telugu and subsequently translated by Sri Bhagavan himself into Tamil. *Appala Pattu* (The Song of the *Poppadum*), especially composed by Sri Bhagavan when his mother Alagammal desired him to help in the preparation of *appalam* is a wonderful piece. When Muruganar composed the *pallavi* and *anupallavi* (the first and second parts) of the song *Anma Viddai* (Self Knowledge) and could not proceed with the rest, he sought the help of Sri Bhagavan. Sri Bhagavan complied with his request and completed the *charanams* (the third part). The whole song is now very well known. This *Upadesa Noon Malai* (Original Works) becomes sweeter and sweeter as you taste (read) it. The more one reads, the more and more one gets enlightened. Devotees will learn this through experience.

After this feast of Knowledge we have the divine words of Siva and Krishna translated by Sri Bhagavan himself. Thus we have *Devi Kalottaram - Jnana Achara Vichara Patalam* (taught by Siva to Parvati), *Sarvajnanottara - Atma*

Sakshatkara Prakaranam (taught by Siva to Kumara) and *Bhagavad Gita Saram* (the essence of the *Gita* taught by Lord Krishna). Translations from the original Sanskrit of Sri Shankaracharya, of the *Dakshinamurti Stotra* (Hymn to Dakshinamurti), *Atma Bodha* (Knowledge of the Self), as well as *Guru Stuti* and *Hastamalaka Stotra* (composed by his disciples) form the third part.

The fourth part consists of translations in prose of Shankara's *Viveka Chudamani* and *Drig Drisya Vivekam*.

At the end comes *Arul Mozhi Thokuppu* (Words of Grace) consisting of three works — *Nan Yar* (Who am I?), *Vichara Sangraham* and *Upadesa Manjari* (Spiritual Instruction). *Nan Yar* consists of instructions received from Sri Bhagavan by Sri Sivaprakasam Pillai and compiled by him. Although short, this work captivates the Heart in a wonderful manner. *Vichara Sangraham* (Self Enquiry): These instructions were given by Sri Bhagavan in writing, in response to the queries of Gambhiram Seshayya. Sri Bhagavan was not in the habit of speaking at that time. The speciality of this work is that Sri Bhagavan has given instructions on paths like *karma*, *bhakti*, etc. This was unusual since he mainly taught the method of Self-enquiry. The contingent reason for giving instruction on other paths was that the questioner himself was following these. *Upadesa Manjari* is a compilation of Sri Bhagavan's sayings by Sadhu Natanananda.

It is certain that by the power of the nectarine words of Bhagavan Sri Maharshi contained in this work, faith in the Lord will increase and struggling souls will be able to free themselves from all kinds of misery and attain the supreme bliss of final beatitude.

Om Tat Sat

Sri Ramanarpanamastu

GLOSSARY

A

advaita: non-duality, often incorrectly termed 'monism'

agami karma: actions good and bad, expected to bear fruit in future births

aham: I; embodied self; soul

aham sphurana: the throb of Self-bliss in the Heart

aham svarupa: one's true nature

ahamkara (or *ahankara):* the ego-self

ajnana: ignorance; knowledge of diversity

ananda: bliss

anartha: evil, worthless

antahkarana: instruments of inner perception

antarmukha drishti: inward vision

apana: one of the five vital airs

aprana: beyond manifest life; devoid of life

asana: yogic posture

astanga-yoga: yoga consisting of eight stages of discipline

atman (or *atma):* self; principle of life and sensation

atma dhyana: Contemplation on the Self

atmanusandhana: - do -

atma vichara: enquiry into the Self

avidya: nescience, ignorance

B

Bhagavan: a commonly used name for God; a title used for one like Sri Ramana who is recognized as having realized his identity with the Self

bahirmukha drishti: outward-turned consciousness

bhakta: a devotee

bhakti: devotion and love

Bharata: a form of address used by Sri Krishna towards Arjuna in the *Bhagavad Gita*, meaning a shining soul

bhavana: continued meditation; steady concentration of mind

Brahma: Lord of Creation; God as the Creator

Brahman: the Absolute

buddhi: intellect; one of the four aspects of the internal organ

C

chakra: a wheel, a yogic centre of concentration

Chandrayana: expiatory fast for a full month, commencing from the full moon, food being diminished every day by one handful during the dark fortnight, and increased in like manner during the bright fortnight

chit: absolute intelligence or consciousness

Chitta: the mental mode turned towards objects; that aspect of the mind in which impressions are stored

D

dahara vidya: contemplation of the deity in the cavity of the Heart

deva: a god or celestial being

devata: a deity

Devi: the Divine Mother or a goddess

dharma: virtuous deeds; harmonious life; a person's natural duty; inherent qualities

dhyana: contemplation; the seventh rung in the ladder of eightfold yoga

drik: subject

drisya: object

G

Ganapati: the elder son of Lord Siva, the remover of obstacles; the same as Lord Ganesa, the chief of Lord Siva's hosts

Gudakesa: an epithet of Arjuna for having conquered sleep; Lord Krishna uses this term in addressing Arjuna

gunas: the three fundamental qualities, tendencies, or stresses which underlie all manifestation; *sattva*, *rajas*, and *tamas,* characterized as white, red and black respectively

H

homa: sacrifice in fire

hridayam: the Heart *(hridi + ayam* = centre + this); the seat of Consciousness at the right side of the chest, as experienced and expounded by Sri Ramana Maharshi

I

Indra: the Lord of the *devas;* the first student of *Brahma Vidya;* the Divine Mother was his teacher

Isa: the supreme Lord

Ishvara: the name of the supreme Lord indicating his lordship of the worlds

J

Jaganmaya: the mystery of the world

jiva: the individual soul or ego

jivan mukta: one who has realized the supreme identity while still in the body

jivan mukti: deliverance while yet in this life

jnana: knowledge of the Absolute transcending form and formlessness

jnana marga: the path of knowledge

jnani: a Self-realized person, a sage; one who has attained realization by the path of knowledge

K

Kailas: a mountain in the Himalayas reputed to be the abode of Lord Siva

kaivalya: absolute Oneness; final emancipation; one of the 108 *Upanishads*

kali yuga: the last of four ages of the world, namely *Krita, Treta, Dwapara,* and *Kali; Kali* is reckoned as having begun in 3102 B.C.

kama: desire; physical love

karma: action, work, deeds; also fruits of action accumulating in three ways as *sanchita, prarabdha,* and *agami*; destiny

karma marga: the path of ritual, religious duties, and action

kevala kumbhaka: retention of breath leading to stilling of the mind, without inhalation or exhalation

kshetra: a sacred place of pilgrimage; in yoga, city, or the field of body

kshetrajna: the conscious principle (known) in the field of the body; the absolute witness aware of the three states of the self: waking, dream, and sleep

kundalini: the mystic circle of three-and-a-half coils situated in the umbilical region; the yogic principle of serpent power; primal *maya*

L

laya: absorption; in yoga, absorption of breath and mind in the Heart

lingam: a vertical column of stone with a rounded end, symbol of the unmanifest Siva

M

Maharshi (maha rishi): great *rishi* or sage

mahat: the intellectual principle as source of *ahamkara* — from the Absolute emanates the unmanifest, from it *mahat* and from *mahat* the *ahamkara*

mahatma: a lofty soul; highly spiritual person; master in tune with the infinite

mahavakya: the four main sentences, proclaiming the truth of *Brahman*, one each from the Itareya (Aitareya) *Upanishad* of Rig Veda, Brihadaranyaka of Yajur Veda, Chhandogya of Sama Veda and Mandukya of Atharva Veda; one of the 108 *Upanishads* explaining the *mahavakyas*

Maheswara: one of the five aspects of Lord Siva, as veiling the truth from souls, till their *karma* is completely worked out

manana: contemplation; the second of the three stages of Vedantic realization

manas: mind, reason, mentality; also used for the aggregate of *Chitta*, *buddhi*, *manas*, and *ahamkara*

mantram (mantra)*:* cosmic sound forms of the Vedas, used for worship and prayer; seed letters for meditation on the form of the Lord; ritualistic incantation

marana: the art of causing death through supernatural powers

math: a meeting place and abode of *sadhus*

maya: illusion, false appearance; manifestation or illusion personified

mithya: the false

moksha: liberation; final emancipation; release from transmigration

mouna: silence; the inexpressible; truth of *Brahman*, expressed by the *Brahman*-knower by his mere abidance in stillness

mudra: hand-pose in worship and dance

mukta: a liberated person

mukti: liberation
mutt: see math

N

nadi: the 72,000 nerves of the body conveying the life force, of which *ida*, *pingala* and *sushumna* are the three main ones; in the state of *samadhi* all of them are merged in the single *para* or *amrita nadi*
nasha: destruction
nididhyasana: the last of the three stages of Vedantic realization; uninterrupted contemplation
nirasa: desirelessness
nirvikalpa samadhi: the highest state of concentration, in which the soul loses all sense of being different from the Universal Self, but a temporary state from which there is return to ego-consciousness
nischala bhava: immobility; steadfastness; eternity
nishtha: abidance in firm meditation
niyama: discipline; religious duties as ordained for the second of the eight stages of yoga

P

padma: lotus; a yoga posture in which the right foot is placed on the left thigh and the left foot on the right thigh
paramapada: the supreme state
paramarthika: an epithet of Arjuna, meaning he who destroys his enemy
Paramatman: the true Self
Partha: Arjuna, the son of Pritha; another name for Kunti, his mother
prajnana ghana: Brahman; the Absolute, immutable knowledge
prakriti: primordial substance out of which all things are created; the primal nature
pramada: swerving from abidance in the Absolute
prana: the first of the five vital airs centred in the Heart
pranava japa: incantation of Om
pranayama: breath control
prarabdha karma: that part of destiny due to past action (karma) which bears fruit in the present birth
Prasthana Traya: the triple cannon of *Vedanta;* the three *Vedantic* scriptural authorities: *Upanishads*, Brahma Sutras, *Bhagavad Gita*

pratyahara: withdrawal of the senses from objectivity: the fifth rung in the ladder of yoga

Puranas: eighteen sacred books ascribed to Vyasa, dealing with primary and secondary creation, genealogy of kings, etc.

purnam: fullness, infinite

Purusha: spirit, soul, the living principle

Purushartha: human ends; objectives worthy of human pursuit, *dharma*, *artha*, *kama* and *moksha*

R

Raghava: an epithet of Sri Rama as belonging to the line of Raghu

raja yoga: the principal system of yoga as taught by Patanjali

rajas: one of the three primal qualities, described as red, the principle of activity (see *guna)*

rishi: sage (see also *maharshi)*

Rudra: Lord Siva in one of his five aspects; God as destroyer

S

Sada Siva: the supreme Lord as eternal goodness

sadguru: the great Master, the true or perfect Guru

sadhana: a spiritual quest or path towards liberation; the technique of spiritual effort

sadhu: an ascetic or one who has renounced the world in quest of liberation

sahasradala: the thousand-petalled lotus; the centre of illumination experienced in the crown of the head on the yogic path

sakshi: witness

samana: one of the five vital airs

sanchita karma: accumulated *karma* of former births that still remains to be experienced

sankalpa: volition, mental activity, thought, tendencies, and attachment

sankhya: one of the systems of Indian philosophy

sannyasa: renunciation

sannyasin: one who has renounced the world

santodanta: one who is calm and self-controlled

sarvatma bhava: the state of experiencing the Self as all; abidance in the oneness of Being

sastras: scriptures
sat: existence; pure Being
Satchidananda: Being-Consciousness-Bliss
sattva: tendency to purity; one of the three *gunas*
savikalpa samadhi: a state of consciousness in which the distinction between knower, knowledge and known is not yet lost
Shakti (or *Sakti):* the manifesting energy of a divine aspect, represented mythologically as the wife of a God
siddha: one endowed with supernatural powers and capable of performing miracles; one who has accomplished the end
siddhi: realization, attainment; also supernatural powers
Siva: the supreme Lord; one of the Hindu Trinity
Sivoham: the incantation 'I am Siva'
Skanda: the younger son of Lord Siva; the leader of the divine hosts; the same as Lord Subrahmanya
Smriti: authoritative Hindu scriptures other than the Vedas *(Sruti)*
sraddha: earnestness, faith; a faithful acquisition of theoretical knowledge of Truth
sravana: hearing of the truth, from the Master
Sruti: Vedas, heard by the sages in their transcendental state and transmitted to disciples by word of mouth
sushupti: deep sleep
svarupa nishta: abidance in the Self

T

tamas: darkness, ignorance; one of the three *gunas*
tanmaya nishta: abidance in the Self
tapas: religious austerities
tat: That; *Brahman*
tattva jnana: knowledge of *Brahman* or *Atman*
tat-tvam-asi: 'That thou Art'
turiya: the fourth state; the witness Consciousness — ever present and unchanging as against the changing states of waking, dreaming, and deep sleep

U

udana: one of the five vital airs, whose seat is in the neck
Upadesa: the spiritual guidance or teaching given by a Guru

Upanishads: philosophical writings forming part of the Vedas

V

Vaikunta: the heaven of Vishnu

vairagya: freedom from worldly desires; dispassion

vasanas: predispositions, tendencies, or propensities of the mind in the present life due to the experiences of former lives

Vasudeva: Lord Krishna, as the son of Vasudeva, the Lord whose manifestation all this world is; one of the 108 *Upanishads* showing the path of Vasudeva

Veda: the sacred books of the Hindus: Rig, Yajur, Sama, and Atharva, revealed through the *rishis*

Vedanta: the absolute Truth as established by the *Upanishads*, *Brahma Sutras*, and *Bhagavad Gita* as interpreted by Sri Vyasa; the end or consummation of the Vedas

veena: a string instrument

vichara: enquiry into the truth of the Self

videhamukta: a liberated being after he has left the body

videhamukti: Self-realization after leaving the body

vijnana: knowledge; discriminating the real from the unreal

vijnanamarga: the path of discriminate knowledge

Vishnu: God as preserver; one of the Hindu Trinity

vishaya vasanas: predisposition towards sense enjoyments

viveka: discrimination

viyoga: separation

vyana: one of the five vital airs, causing the circulation of blood and pervading all the body

vyavaharika: the phenomenal or empirical

Y

yama: self-control, the first rung in the ladder of the eightfold yoga: abstention from lying, killing, theft, lust, covetousness

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Notes on Pronunciation

The vowel pronunciation in the transliteration used in this text follow the Continental rather than the English values. They are approximately as follows:

a	as in father
e	between *e* in ten and *ai* in wait
i	between *i* in bid and *ee* in meet
o	between *o* in hot and *or* in short
u	between *u* in put and *oo* in shoot
ai	as *igh* in night
ou	as in pound

The consonants are pronounced as in English, with the following exceptions:

1. A consonant between *v* and *w* but approximating more to *v* is transliterated by some writers as *v* and by others as *w*, as for instance in the two forms *Ishvara* and *Ishwara*.

2. A consonant between *s* and *sh* but approximating more to *sh* is transliterated by some writers as *s* and by others as *sh*, as for instance in the two forms *Isvara* and *Ishvara*.

This consonant is used in both *Siva* and *Vishnu*, but it has become usual to transliterate it as *s* in the former case and *sh* in the latter, and therefore that usage is followed here.

3. The words *jnani* and *jnana* are pronounced approximately as *nyani* and *nyana*.

4. *H* after a letter other than *s* or *c* does not change the letter but is slightly aspirated.